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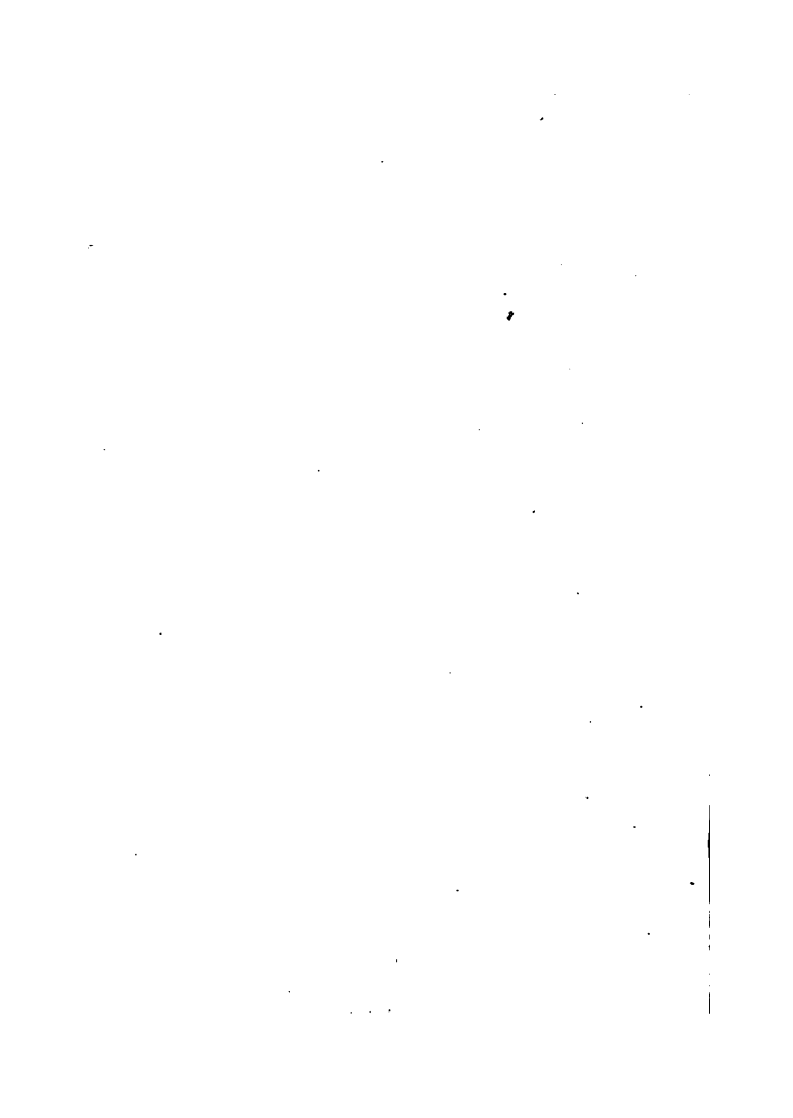
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A MEMOIR
OF
LEIGHTON,
WITH
SELECTIONS FROM HIS WORKS;
ALSO
EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS
OF
RUTHERFORD.

LONDON :
ALFRED W. BENNETT, 5, BISHOPSGATE, WITHOUT.
1859.

210 m. 186.



P R E F A C E.

ALTHOUGH we are well assured that the strength of the Christian to fight the fight of faith must ever be founded on the Rock Christ Jesus alone:—"other foundation can no man lay than that is laid"—still the lives and writings of great and good men come back as beacons and as waymarks to the Christian traveller—they cheer and help him in his onward way.

The departed Christian may and does—

. . . . "Leave behind him
Footprints on the sands of time ;
Footprints which perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's stormy main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,—
Seeing, may take heart again."

The following extracts from Leighton and Rutherford will, it is hoped, be acceptable to those who possess neither the voluminous works of the former, nor the old edition of the latter.

1859.

R. F.

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MEMOIR
OF
ROBERT LEIGHTON.

ROBERT LEIGHTON, the subject of the following memoir, was born in the year 1611; whether in Edinburgh, or in London, is not very certainly known, neither is it now a matter of much importance.

His father, Dr. Alexander Leighton, was noted as a zealous Presbyterian, and under this administration of religion his son was educated.

Of the boyish days of Leighton we have but scanty records, except from his affectionately attached sister, who says of him, "that his singular teachableness and piety, from his tenderest age, endeared him greatly to his parents, who used to speak with admiration of his extraordinary exemption from childish faults and follies."

At college his conduct appears to have been so uniformly good as to have attracted the notice of his superiors, who congratulated his father on having such a son. He was, however, guilty of one satirical poem on the warden of his college, in which there is said to have been "much good-tempered playfulness of fancy." After taking his degree, he passed some years on the Continent, part of the time at Douay, where, while highly deprecating the superstition and errors of the Church of Rome, he was struck by beholding men, even under that administration of religion, whose lives were on the strictest models of primitive piety; and he never would denounce with fire and faggot every individual who chanced to be within the pale of the Church of Rome; indeed violent denunciation in every form—except against sin, his soul abhorred.

It was whilst at Douay that he became in degree shaken in his attachment to the Presbyterian Church.

He appears, both at that time, and in after life, to have had a very decided feeling, as to the gain it had been to him thus early to have seen so much of men and manners, in different lands, and under various circumstances; but we will give his opinion in his own words:—"There is," says he, "a very peculiar advantage in travel, not to be understood but by the trial of it."

In 1641, he entered on his duties as a Presbyterian minister in a small parish in Midlothian. Whilst holding this office, he appears to have done his work with exemplary devotedness and fidelity; but he did not mingle in the convocation enough to satisfy his fellow-presbyters, who were fond of discussing "The Covenant," forcing it even upon conscientious objections.

It is said of Leighton that his aim was not to win proselytes to a party, but converts to Jesus Christ. When attacked by some of the zealous party on not preach-

ing up "the times," he meekly replied, "If all of you preach up 'the times' you may surely allow one poor brother to preach up Jesus Christ and eternity."

He retained his post as pastor in the parish of Newlottle, until 1653, when he resigned it; and a few years later he gave up his connection altogether with the Presbyterian Church, and became a member of the Episcopal Church. This change he appears to have made on conscientious grounds: never probably was there a man in whose mind worldly ambition had less place. It was not long, however, before the bishopric of Dumblane was offered to him. Slowly, and with evident reluctance, did he accept the proffered promotion; but we will give his own words:—"This word I will add, that, as there has been nothing of my choice in the thing, so I undergo it, if it must be, as a mortification, and that greater than a cell or hair-cloth; and whether any will believe this or not, I am not careful."

The exclusive and narrow spirit of many of his spiritual colleagues Leighton highly disapproved : he says,—“ I have met with many cunning plotters, but with few truly honest undertakers. Many have I seen who were wise and great as to this world ; but of such as were willing to be weak that others may be strong, and whose only aim it is to promote the prosperity of Zion, have I not found one in ten thousand.”

So troubled was he at the persecuting spirit in the diocese, that he resolved to present himself before the king, and offer to resign his post unless things were changed. The result was, that Charles would not hear of his resignation, but pledged himself to enact the sheathing of the secular sword, against which Leighton had so faithfully protested. The law which would goad Dissenters into confinement, gaols, and corporal punishments, was, by the intercession of Leighton, annulled.

So little did the bishop expect this concession on the part of the king, that,

before going, he wrote a farewell charge to his clergy, in which he says:—"My last advice to you is that you continue in the study of peace and holiness, and grow and abound in love to your great Lord and Master, and to the souls for whom he died. If in anything, whether in word or deed, I have given you offence, and unnecessarily pained a single individual amongst you, I do earnestly and humbly crave forgiveness."

Leighton continued in Dumblane until the year 1669, when he was translated to Glasgow, where he continued until age and infirmities made him desire rest. He says of himself,—"*Senectute fractus, portam exoptans.*"

The disregard of worldly emolument was a striking feature of his character. The sum expended on his personal requirings was wonderfully small, but his liberality to others seemed scarcely to know any bounds. It has been said of that, except a bare allowance for his

own wants, all he received he gave to the poor.

On being called to a bishopric, he objected to be addressed as "My Lord." It has been said of him,—“The only priority he sought was in labour, the only ascendancy he coveted was in self-denial and holiness, and in these respects he had few competitors for pre-eminence.”

Without holding any exaggerated views as regards the doctrine of perfection, he would often lament the low practice of those who ought to have been more earnestly pressing towards the mark. “So much talk,” he says, “and so little action, religion turned almost to a tune and air of words, self and pride, and passion domineering, while we speak of ‘being in Christ and clothed with him,’ and believe it because we speak it so often, and so confidently. Well I know,” he says in writing to his friend, “you are not willing to be thus deceived, and having some glances of the beauty of holiness, *aim* no

lower than perfection, which, in the end, we hope to attain ; in the meanwhile, the smallest advances toward which are more worth than crowns or sceptres."

As regards natural things, Leighton was not a fearful and timid Christian ; indeed he evinced great disregard of personal danger.

On one occasion, having, with his brother Sir Ellis Leighton and some others, embarked in a boat on the Thames, they were, from the unskilful management of the boat, or some other cause, apparently in danger of going to the bottom. The rest of the party were in great alarm, but Leighton never for a moment lost his accustomed serenity. To some of his friends, who afterwards expressed their astonishment at his calmness in the midst of danger, he only replied, " Why, what harm would it have been if we had all been safely landed on the other side ? "

On one occasion, during the civil wars, he was anxious to visit his brother, and

while on his way to the camp where his brother then was, he found himself benighted in the midst of a thicket, and, having lost the path, he sought in vain for an outlet. Almost spent with fatigue and hunger, he began to think his situation desperate, and, dismounting, he spread his cloak on the ground, and knelt down to pray. With implicit devotion he resigned his soul to God, intreating, however, that if it were not the divine will for him then to conclude his days, some way of deliverance might be opened. Then, remounting his horse, he threw the reins on its neck, and the animal left to itself, or rather to the conduct of an over-ruling Providence, made straight into the high road, threading all the mazes of the wood with unerring certainty.

Of the habits and employments of Leighton after he resigned the archbishopric but few particulars remain; he appears to have lived chiefly with his beloved sister Lightmaker.

“ The dressing and undressing of his

soul,"—as he used to call devotional exercises,—was now, he thought, the business to which his few remaining days should be consecrated.

After disburdening himself of all episcopal dignities, he again became a simple parish minister. In the peasant's cottage it is said of him, "his tongue dropped manna." Prayer and praise were the clothing of his spirit. "It is not," he would say, "the want of religious houses, but of spiritual hearts that glues the wings of our affections and hinders the more frequent practice of this leading precept of the divine law, fervently to lift up our souls unto God, and to have our conversation in heaven." His favourite motto was, "*Necesse est non ut multum legamus sed ut multum oremus.*" This he accounted "the vessel with which living water can be drawn from the well of divine mysteries." Pointing to his books one day, he said to his nephew, "One devout thought is worth them all."

Teighton's kindness and forbearance

were very uncommon. It is said that he had a man-servant who by his thoughtlessness often tried his master's equanimity, and that one day this man, having a fancy for the amusement of fishing, locked the door of the house, carried off the key, and left his master imprisoned. He was too much engrossed with his sport to think of returning until evening, when the only reproach he received from the meek bishop for this gross misbehaviour was, "John, when you next go a-fishing, remember to leave the key in the door."

Of his forbearance toward those who differed from him in the administration of religion we have undoubted proof. It has been said that if he ever did meddle with them it was in so gentle a manner as at once to show the meekness and the largeness of his spirit. "I prefer," he would say, "an erroneous honest man to the most orthodox knave in the world, and I would rather convince a man he has a soul to be saved, and induce him to live up to that belief, than to bring him over

to my opinion in whatsoever thing beside. Would to God that men were as holy as they might be under the worst of forms now amongst us!" On being told of some one who had changed his religious persuasion, all he said was, "Is he more meek, more dead to the world? If so, he has made a happy change."

He was not fond of giving his opinion on speculative points in religion, and when one day pressed to say what he thought of the millenium, and as to the saints reigning with Christ, he tried to avoid the question, and merely replied, "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him."

"He well knew," writes his nephew, "when it was expedient to be silent, and when it behoved him to speak, and he was of opinion that 'the silence of a good man will sometimes convey a more effectual lesson than his discourse.'" Accordingly he was averse to long or obscure preaching; "for it is better," said he, "to send the people home still hungry than surfeited."

There is much meaning in a prayer which he often used, " Deliver me, O Lord, from the errors of wise men, yea, of good men."

He was by nature endowed with warm affection ; of this we find proof in a letter to his brother-in-law, Lightmaker, after the death of a child.

" I am glad of your health," he writes, " and of the recovery of your little ones ; but indeed it was a sharp stroke of a pen that told me your pretty Johnny was dead, and I felt it truly more than, to my remembrance, I did the death of any child in my life-time. Sweet thing ! and is he so quickly laid to sleep ? Happy he ! Though we shall no more have the pleasure of his lisping and laughing, he shall have no more pain of crying, nor of being sick, nor of dying : he has wholly escaped the troubles of childhood, and the riper and deeper griefs of riper years ; this poor life being all along a linked chain of many sorrows and many deaths.

" Tell my dear sister she is now so

much more akin to the other world, and this will quickly be past to us all for ever. John is but gone an hour or two sooner to bed, as children are used to do, and we are undressing to follow. And the more we put off the love of this present world, and all things superfluous beforehand, we shall have the less to do when we lie down. It shall refresh me to hear from you at your leisure.

“Your affectionate brother,

“R. LEIGHTON.”

Leighton was a great admirer of rural scenery, and in his rides on the Sussex Downs often would he descant, with devout fervour, on the marvellous and beautiful works of the Almighty Architect.

It has been said of him, that to the things of time he died daily. He would talk of death in no melancholy tone, but as one whose heart was fixed on the blissful realities of the yet unseen world of which, through the mercy of God, in Christ Jesus, he had long had an assured

hope. In bodily illness he was remarkably cheerful ; but it may, for the encouragement of weak believers be recorded, that he did not presume upon absolute assurance of final salvation. Conversing one day in his usual strain of holy animation on the blessedness of being fixed *as a pillar* in the heavenly Jerusalem, *to go no more out*, (Rev.i.11,12) he was interrupted by a relation exclaiming, "Oh ! but you have assurance." "No, truly," he replied ; "only a good hope, and a desire to see what they are doing on the other side."

Burnet says of him, "He seemed to have the lowest thoughts of himself possible, and to desire that all other persons should think as meanly of him as he did of himself, and he bore all sorts of ill-usage and reproach like a man that took pleasure in it." Leighton, when speaking of his own state, says, "Instead of all fine notions, *Ι fly to Κυριε ελεησον, Χριστε ελεησον* " —Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy.

Of this great and good man little now

remains to be said, except of his dismissal from the things of time to that higher and holier world, upon the unseen things of which his hopes had long been fixed.

Burnet, who had not seen him for a considerable time, one day greeted him on appearing so vigorous. Leighton replied, that "for all that he was very near his end ; his work was almost done."

The very next day he was attacked with a cold, which ended in pleurisy. He sank rapidly, soon becoming speechless and apparently unconscious, and after about twelve hours' panting for breath he died without a struggle, in the arms of his faithful friend Burnet.

We have no last words in the way of "dying sayings" to record ; but his life had been one long and continued preparation for this hour, and testimonies to the certainty and fulness of his hope in Christ were not needed. He knew in whom he had believed, and the works and spirit of his whole course on earth

had given abounding evidence of his faith. Who would not say, in contemplating the end of such a man, "*Let me die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his?*"

Leighton had long had a fear of having the solemnity of a dying hour interrupted, and his mind distracted, by witnessing the sorrow of those he loved. He had also a singular desire that his death might take place at an inn ; in such a place he thought a believer might properly finish his pilgrimage the whole world being to him "but as a large and noisy inn, and he a wayfarer tarrying only for a time."

In both these respects his desire was granted : his death took place at the Bell Inn, Warwick-lane, and of his particular friends Burnet alone was with him.

His remains were taken to Norsted Reynes, which had, since he resigned the episcopal office, generally been his home.

His funeral was most simple, with—as it has been said—no other pomp to hallow

his obsequies than “ the unbought attendance and expressive tears of the surrounding neighbourhood.”

Burnet, who was the long-tried and faithful friend of Leighton, says of him :—
“ He had the greatest elevation of soul, —the largest compass of knowledge,—the most mortified and most heavenly disposition, that I ever yet saw in mortal. I can with great truth say that, in a free and frequent conversation with him for above two-and-twenty years, I never knew him say an idle word that had not a direct tendency to edification ; and I never once saw him in any other temper but that in which I wish to be at the last moment of my life. From that pattern which I saw in him, and that conversation which I had with him, I know how much I have to answer to God.”

One of Leighton’s biographers, in speaking of his style, says :—“ That which adds so peculiar a zest to his compositions is the quality usually denominated unction.”

EXTRACTS FROM LEIGHTON.

“Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers,” &c. (1 Peter i. 1.)

THIS excellent epistle (full of evangelical doctrine and apostolic authority) is a brief and yet a very clear summary, both of the consolations and instruction needful to the encouragement and direction of a Christian in his journey to heaven; elevating his thoughts and desires to that happiness, and strengthening him against all opposition in the way, both that of corruption within, and temptations and afflictions from without.

We see here, Peter's office or title—*an Apostle*, not *Chief Bishop*.

Some in their glossing have been so impudent as to add that beside the text, though in chap. v. verse 4, he gives that

title to Christ alone, and to himself only *fellow elder*. We have in our apostle a singular instance of human frailty on the one side, and of the sweetness of divine grace on the other. Free and rich grace it is, indeed, that forgives and swallows up multitudes of sins—not only sins before conversion, as to St. Paul, but foul offences committed after conversion, as to David and to this apostle—not only once raising them from the dead, but when they fall stretching out the same hand, and raising them again, and restoring them to their station, and comforting them in it by his free Spirit, *through sanctification of the Spirit*, &c.

The Spirit of God draws a man out of the world, by a sanctified light sent into his mind, discovering to him how base and false the sweetness of sin is, and setting before his eyes the free and happy condition, *the glorious liberty, of the sons of God*.

Endeavour to have this sanctifying

Spirit in yourselves—pray much for it ; for his promise is passed to us that *He will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask it.* And shall we be such fools as to want it for want of asking ?

The stones which are appointed for that glorious temple above, are hewn and polished and prepared for it here : as the stones were wrought and prepared in the mountains for building the temple at Jerusalem.

They that think they are bound for heaven in the ways of sin, have either found a new way untrodden by all who are gone thither, or will find themselves deceived in the end. We need not, then, that poor shift for the pressing of holiness and obedience upon men, to represent it to them as the meriting cause of salvation.

This is not at all to the purpose, seeing that without it the necessity of holiness to salvation is pressing enough ; for holiness is no less necessary to salvation than if it were the meriting cause of it ; it is as in-

separably tied to it in the purpose of God. And in the order of performance, godliness is as certainly before salvation as if salvation did wholly and altogether depend upon it, and were in point of justice deserved by it.

Seeing, then, there is no other way to happiness but by holiness, no assurance of the love of God without it, take the apostle's advice : study it, seek it, follow earnestly after holiness, *without which no man shall see the Lord.*

Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Now let us consider the matter of the Apostle's desire for them : *Grace and peace.*

What are *preventing grace—assisting grace—working and co-working grace* (as we may admit these differences in a sound sense) but divers names of the same effectual saving grace, in relation to our different estates, as the same sea receives different names from the different parts of the shore it beats upon.

Peace.—As peace is a choice blessing,

and this is the choicest peace—the flower of peace growing on the root of grace—this spiritual peace hath two things in it : 1, Reconciliation with God ; 2, Tranquillity of spirit.

The ground and matter of enmity, betwixt God and man, is the rebellion, the sin of man ; and he being naturally altogether sinful, there can proceed nothing from him but what foment and increases the hostility. It is grace alone, the most free grace of God, that contrives and offers, and makes the peace ; else it had never been ; we had universally perished without it. Now in this consists the wonder of divine grace, that the Almighty God seeks agreement, and entreats for it, with sinful clay, which he could destroy in a moment.

Jesus Christ, the mediator and purchaser of this peace, bought it with his blood, killed the enmity by his own death. (Eph. xi. 15.) And therefore the tenor of it in the Gospel runs still in his name. (Rom.

v. 1) ; *We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* And Paul expresses it in his salutations, which are the same with this, Grace and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

As the free love and grace of God appointed this means and way of our peace, and offered it ; so the same grace applies it, and makes it ours, and gives us faith to apprehend it. And from our sense of this peace and reconciliation with God arises that which is our inward peace,—a calm and quiet temper of mind.

All the peace and favour of the world cannot calm a troubled heart; but where this peace is which Christ gives, all the trouble and disquiet of the world cannot disturb it. *When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when He hideth his face, who then can give peace?*

All outward distress, to a mind thus at peace, is but as the rattling of the hail upon the tiles to him that sits within the house at a sumptuous feast.

What makes the world take up a prejudice against religion as a sour, unpleasant thing? They see the afflictions and griefs of Christians, but they do not see their joys, the inward pleasure of mind that is theirs in a very hard estate. Have you not tried other ways enough? Hath not he tried them who had more ability and skill for it than you, and found them not only *vanity*, but *vexation of spirit*? An ungodly man may sleep to death in the lethargy of carnal presumption and impenitency; but a true, lively, solid peace he cannot have. *There is no peace to the wicked saith my God.* (Isa. lvii. 21.)

And if he say there is none, speak peace who will, if all the world with one voice should speak it, it shall prove none.


Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus

you, unless you put on holy resolutions to break through them, and trample them under foot, and take this kingdom by a kind of violence, which God is so well pleased with.

He is willingly overcome by that force, and gives this kingdom most willingly where it is so taken ; it is not attained by slothfulness, and sitting still with folded hands ; it must be taken with strength of faith, with armies of prayers and tears, and they who set upon it thus are sure to take it.

Learn to use what you have as travellers, and let your home, your inheritance, your treasure be on high, which is by far the richest, and the safest ; and if it be so with you, then, *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

A man is not only unknown to others, but to himself, that hath never met with such difficulties as require faith and Christian fortitude and patience to surmount them. How shall a man know whether



his meekness and calmness of spirit be real or not, while he meets with no provocation, nothing that contradicts or crosses him ? But when somewhat sets upon him that is in itself very unpleasant and grievous to him, and yet, if in that case he retain his moderation of spirit, and flies not out into impatience, either against God or man, this gives experiment of the truth and soundness of this grace within him ; whereas standing water, which is clear at top while it is untouched, yet, if it have mud at the bottom, stir it a little and it rises presently.

God delights to call forth his champions, to meet with great temptations as commanders in war, put men of most valour and skill upon the hardest service.—God sets some strong, furious trial upon strong Christians; made strong by his own grace, to show to the world, that, though there is a great deal of the counterfeit coin of profession in religion, yet some there are who have the power, the reality of it, and that

is not an invention, but there is truth in it; that the invincible grace, the very Spirit of God, dwells in the hearts of true believers; that He hath a number who do not only speak big, but do indeed and in good earnest despise the world and overcome it by his strength. *Through manifold temptations.* It were no hard condition to have a trial now and then, with long ease and prosperity betwixt; but to be plied with one affliction at the heels of another, to have them come thronging in by multitudes, and of different kinds, uncouth unaccustomed evils, such as a man hath not been acquainted with before, this is that which is often the portion of those who are the beloved of God. Psalm xlii. 7—“*Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.*”

“Though now for a season if need be ye are in heaviness.” One consideration which moderates this heaviness is its shortness. Because we willingly forget eternity,

therefore this moment seems much in our eyes ; but if we could look upon it aright, of how little concernment is it what be our condition here ! If it were as prosperous as we could wish or imagine, it is but for a *little season*.

The rich man in the Gospel talked of many years ; but *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee*, was the longest period.

This is but one thing, while the cause of your grief is, *temptation and manifold temptations* ; yet this one thing (which follows) weighs down all the multitude. The heart, being grieved in one thing, naturally looks out for its ease to some other, and there is usually somewhat that is a man's great comfort, that he turns his thoughts to, when he is crossed and afflicted in other things ; but herein lies the folly of the world—that the things they choose for their refuge and comfort are such as may change themselves, and turn into discomfort and sorrow ; but the godly man,

who is the fool, in the natural man's eyes goes beyond all the rest in his wise choice in this. He rises above all that is subject to change—casts his anchor within the vail. That in which he rejoiceth is still matter of joy unmoveable and unalterable—as in the words of the Psalmist—*Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.*

When we shall receive that rich and pure and abiding inheritance, that salvation which shall be revealed in the last time, and when time itself shall cease to be, then there shall be no more reckoning our joys by days and hours, but they shall run parallel with eternity. Then all our love that is now scattered and parcelled out upon the vanities amongst which we are here, shall be united and gathered into one, and fixed upon God, and the soul filled with the delight of his presence.

The sorrow was limited and bounded; but this joy—this leaping for joy—is not

bounded—it cannot be too much—its measure is to know no measure.

Grace doth not pluck up by the roots and wholly destroy the natural passions of the mind, because they are distempered by sin ! That were an extreme remedy to cure by killing, and heal by cutting off ; no, but it corrects the distemper in them, it does not dry up this main stream of love, but purifies it from the mud, which, in its wrong course, it is full of, or turns it into its right channel, by which it may run into happiness, and empty itself into the ocean of goodness.

Religion debars not from the lawful delights which are taken in natural things, but teaches the moderate and regular use of them, which is far the sweeter ; for things lawful in themselves are in their excess sinful, and so prove bitterness in the end. The delights and pleasures of sin, religion indeed banishes, but it is to change them for this joy that is unspeakable and beyond them.

It is true the godly are subject to great distresses and afflictions, but their joy is not extinguished by them ; no, nor diminished neither, but often sensibly increased. When they have least of the world's joy, they abound most in spiritual consolations and then relish them best. *We rejoice in tribulation*, saith the Apostle.—Say not thou—If I betake myself to the way of godliness, I must bid farewell to gladness, —never a merry day more ; no, on the contrary, never a truly joyful day till then ; yea, no days at all, but night to the soul, till it entertain Jesus Christ and his kingdom, which consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

No man knows the things of a man but the Spirit of man that is in him.
(1 Cor. ii. 11.)

The soul is nothing but darkness and blindness within till that same Spirit that shines without in the word shine also within, and effectually make it light ; but at once done, then is the word read

with some measure of the same Spirit by which it was written.

Enquire whether you have received this Spirit or not ; whether it be come to you and into you or not ; whether the *kingdom of God is within you*, as our Saviour speaks—Luke xvii. 21.

It is the most woful condition that can be, not to be far from the kingdom of God, and yet to fall short and miss of it. The grace of God revealed in the Gospel, is entreating you daily to receive it, is willing to become yours if you reject it not. Were your eyes open to behold the beauty and excellency of this grace, there would need no deliberation ; yea, you would endure none. Desire your eyes to be opened and enlightened from above, that you may know it, and your hearts open that you may be happy by receiving it.

There are men ministering the doctrine of salvation to others, and *not to themselves* ; carrying it all in their heads and on their tongues, and none of it in their

hearts; not hearing it, even while they preach it; extending the bread of life to others and eating none of it themselves.

And this the Apostle says he was most careful to avoid, and therefore dealt severely with his body, that it might not in this way endanger his soul. *I beat down my body*, says he, *and keep it in subjection, lest when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway.*—(1 Cor. ix. 27.) It is not in this sense that the prophets ministered to others and not to themselves. No; they had joy and comfort in the very hopes of the Redeemer to come, and in the belief of the things which others had spoken, and which themselves spake concerning him. And thus the true preachers of the Gospel, though their ministerial gifts are for the use of others, yet that salvation which they preach they lay hold of, and partake of themselves; as your boxes wherein perfumes are kept for garments, and other uses, are themselves perfumed by keeping them.

*On Differences of Opinion amongst the
Professors in the Christian Church.*

Profane men do not only stumble but fall, and break their necks upon these divisions.

We see (think they, and some of them possibly say it out) that they who mind religion most cannot agree upon it; our easiest way is, not to embroil ourselves; nor at all to be troubled with the business. Many are of Gallio's temper,—they will care for none of these things. Thus these offences prove a mischief to the profane world, as our Saviour says, "*Woe to the world because of offences.*"

Then those on the erring side, who are taken with new opinions and fancies, are altogether taken up with them, their main thoughts are spent upon them; and thus the sap is drawn from that which should nourish and prosper in their hearts—

sanctified useful knowledge and saving grace.

It is also a loss to those that oppose errors and divisions that they are forced to be busied in this way; for the wisest and godliest of them are sensible that disputes in religion are no friends to that which is far sweeter in it, but hinder and abate it; viz., those pious and devout thoughts that are both the more useful and truly delightful.

On a Lively and Living Hope.

That which Alexander said when he dealt liberally about him was, *that he left hope to himself*. The children of God may more wisely and happily say, when they leave the hot pursuit of the world to others and despise it, that "*their position is hope.*"


The thread of Alexander's life was cut off in the midst of his victories, and so all his hopes vanished; but their hope cannot

die nor disappoint them. But then it is said to be *lively*, not only *objectively* but *effectively*; enlivening and comforting the children of God in all distresses; enabling them to encounter and surmount all difficulties in the way. Worldly hopes often mock men, and so cause them to be ashamed. . . . Now worldly hopes do thus, they put the fool upon a man; when he hath judged himself sure, and laid so much weight and expectation on them, then they break and fail him; they are not living but lying hopes, and dying hopes; they die often before us, and we live to bury them, and see our own folly and infelicity in trusting to them; but at the utmost they die with us when we die, and can accompany us no further. But this hope answers expectation to the full, and much beyond it, and deceives in no way, but in that happy way of far exceeding it. A *living* hope, living in death itself! The world dares say no more for

its device than "*Dum spiro spero*;" but the children of God can add, by virtue of this living hope, "*Dum expiro spero*."

"*A crown of glory that fadeth not away*."—(1 Pet. v. 4.)

No change at all there, no winter and summer; not like the poor comforts here, but a bliss always flourishing. The grief of the saints here is not so much for the changes of outward things, as of their inward comforts, *Suavis hora sed brevis mora*. Sweet presences of God they sometimes have, but they are short, and often interrupted; but *there* no cloud shall come between them and their sun; they shall behold him in his full brightness for ever. As there shall be no change in their beholding, so no weariness nor abatement of their delight in beholding. They sing a new song, always the same, and yet always new. The sweetest of our music, if it were to be heard but for one whole day,



would weary those who are most delighted with it. What we have here cloy, but satisfies not ; the joys above never cloy, and yet always satisfy.

One consideration which moderates all trials here is their shortness. Because we willingly forget eternity, therefore this moment seems much in our eyes ; but, if we could look upon it aright, of how little concernment is it what be our condition here ! If it were as prosperous as we could wish or imagine, it is but for a *little season*. The rich man in the gospel talked of many years ; but “ *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee,*” was the longest period given him.

“ The way of the just,” saith Solomon, “ is as the shining light, that *shineth more and more to the perfect day.*” Still making forward and ascending towards perfection, moving as fast, when they are clouded by affliction as any time else ; yea, all that seems to work against them furthers them. Those graces that would possibly

grow heavy and unwieldy by too much ease, are held in breath and increase their activity and strength by conflict. Divine grace, even in the heart of weak and sinful man, is an invincible thing. Drown it in the waters of adversity, it rises more beautiful, as not being drowned indeed, but only washed; throw it into the furnace of fiery trials, it comes out purer, and loses nothing but the dross which our corrupt nature mixes with it. . . . The soul that is persuaded of this, in the midst of storms and tempests enjoys a calm, triumphs in disgraces, grows richer by all its losses, and by death itself attains this immortal life.

On Free Grace.

This grace He first gives freely, and no less freely the increases of it, and with the same gracious hand sets the crown of glory upon all the grace that He hath given

before. It is but the following forth of his own work, and fulfilling his own thoughts of free love, which love hath no cause but in himself, and finds none worthy, but gives them all the worthiness they have, and accepts of their love, not as worthy in itself to be accepted, but because He himself hath wrought it in them. Not only the first tastes, but the full draught of the water of life is given freely.

On Repentance.

There is nothing doth so kindly work repentance as the right apprehension of the mercy and love of God. The beams of that love are more powerful to melt the heart than all the flames of Mount Sinai, all the threatenings and terrors of the law. Sin is the root of our misery, and therefore it is the proper work of this mercy to rescue the soul from it, both from the

guilt and the power of it at once. Can you think that there is any suitableness in it; that the peculiar people of God should despise his laws, and practise nothing but rebellion; that those in whom He hath magnified his mercy should take pleasure in abusing it; or that He hath washed any with the blood of his Son to the end that they may still "*wallow again in the mire?*" As if we were redeemed not *from* sin, but *to* sin; as if we should say *we are delivered to do all these abominations*, as the prophet speaks (Jer. vii. 10).

Oh let us not dare thus abuse and affront the free grace of God, if we mean and hope to be saved by it; but let as many as would be found amongst those that obtain mercy walk as His people, whose peculiar inheritance is His mercy. And seeing this *grace of God hath appeared unto us*, let us embrace it, and let it effectually teach us to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts* (Tit. ii. 11, 12).

On the Marks of being Saved.

If you be such as can wallow in the same puddle with the profane world and take a share of their ungodly ways, and if, though your outward carriage be somewhat more smooth, *you regard iniquity in your heart*, have your heart ardent in the love and pursuit of the world, but frozen to God ; if you have some bosom idol that you hide and entertain, and cannot find in your heart to part with some one beloved sin—whatsoever it be—for all the love that God hath manifested to man *in the Son of his love Jesus Christ* ; in a word, if you can please and delight yourselves in anyway displeasing unto God, (Though his people, while they are here, have spots, yet these are not the spots of his people that I am now speaking of), I can give you no assurance that, as yet, you have obtained mercy ; on the contrary, it is certain that *the wrath of*

God is yet abiding on you, and if you continue in this state you are in apparent danger of perishing under it. You are yet children of spiritual darkness and in the way to utter and everlasting darkness. Know you what it is to be destitute of this mercy? It is a woful state, though you had all worldly enjoyments, and were at the top of outward prosperity, to be shut out from the mercy and love of God.

Of all children the children of God are the most obliged to obedience, for he is both the wisest and the most loving of fathers, and the sum of all his commands is that which is their glory and happiness,—that they endeavour to be like Him;—to resemble their Heavenly Father. “*Be ye perfect even as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect,*”* says our Saviour; and here the apostle is citing out of the law—“Be ye holy for I am holy.”† Law and gospel agree in this. Again: children who resemble their fathers, as they grow

* Matt. v. 48.

† Lev. xi. 44.

up in years they grow the more like to him ; thus the children of God do increase in their resemblance, and are daily more and more renewed after his image. There is in them an innate likeness, by reason of his image impressed on them in their first renovation, and his Spirit dwelling within them, and there is a continual increase of it arising from their pious imitation and study of conformity which is here exhorted to.

On Ministry.

Ministers are not to instruct only, nor to exhort only, but to do both ; to exhort men to holiness, and the duties of a Christian life, without instructing them in the doctrine of faith, and bringing them to Jesus Christ is to build a house without a foundation. And on the other side, to instruct the mind in the knowledge of Divine things, and neglect the pressing of that practice and power of godliness

which is the undivided companion of true faith, is to forget the building that ought to be raised upon that foundation *once laid*, which is likewise a point of very great folly. Or, if men, after laying that right foundation, do proceed to the super-structure of vain and empty speculations, it is but to *build hay and stubble* instead of those solid truths that direct the soul in the way to happiness which are of more solidity and worth than *gold and silver* and *precious stones* (1 Cor. ii. 12). Christ and the doctrine that reveals him is called by St. Paul *the mystery of godliness*. As Christ is the object of faith, so is He the spring and fountain of godliness. The apostle having, we see, in his foregoing discourse unfolded the excellency of Christ in him, proceeds hence to exhort them to that pure and spiritual temper of mind and course of life that becomes them as Christians.

There is a faculty of reproof required in the ministry, and sometimes a necessity

of very sharp rebukes, cutting ones. They who have much of the *spirit of meekness* may have a *rod* by them too, to use upon necessity (1 Cor. iv. 21). But surely the way of meekness is that they use most willingly, as the apostle there implies; and out of all question, with ingenuous minds, the mild way of sweet entreaties is very forcible, as oil that penetrates and sinks in insensibly; or they prevail as the sunbeams, which, without any noise, make the traveller cast his cloak, which all the blustering of the wind could not do, but made him rather gather it closer, and bind it faster about him. We see the apostles are frequent in this strain of entreaties,—“*I beseech you.*” Now the word of entreaty is strengthened much by the other,—“*Dearlly beloved.*” Scarcely can the harshest reproofs, much less gentle reproofs, be thrown back that have on them the stamp of love. That which is known to come from love cannot readily but be so received.

*On the Distinction between a Worldly and
a Christian Spirit.*

If you were citizens of this world, then you might drive the same trade with them, and follow the same lusts ; but seeing you are chosen and called out of this world, and invested into a new society, made free of another city, and are therefore here but travellers passing through to your own country, it is very reasonable that there be this difference betwixt you and the world,—that whilst they live as at home, your carriage be such as becomes strangers ; not surfeiting on their delicious fruits, but, as wise strangers, walking warily and soberly ; minding most of all your journey homewards, suspecting dangers and snares in your way, and so walking with holy fear,—as the Hebrew word for a *stranger* imports.

The Will of God.


This is the strongest and most binding reason that can be used to a Christian mind which hath resigned itself to be governed by that rule to have *the will of God* for its law. Whatsoever is required of it upon that warrant it cannot refuse. Although it cross a man's own humour and his private interest, yet, if his heart be subjected to the will of God he will not stand with him in anything. One word from God,—“*I will have it so*”—silences all, and carries it against all opposition.

It were a great point, too, if we could be persuaded to esteem duty of this. It would make light and easy work in those things that go so hardly on with us. Will He have my charity liberal not only in *giving* but in *forgiving*, and real and hearty in both? Will He have me *bless them that curse me, and do good to them that hate me, and love my enemies?* Thoup

the world counts it a hard task, and my own corrupt heart possibly finds it so, yet it shall be done; and not as upon unpleasant necessity, but willingly and cheerfully, and with the more delight, because it is difficult, for so it proves my obedience the more, and my love to Him whose will it is. Though mine enemies deserve not my love, yet He who bids me love them does; and if He will have this the touchstone to try the uprightness of my love to Him, shall it fail there? No; His will commands me so absolutely, and He himself is so lovely, that there can be nobody so unlovely in themselves, or to me, but I can love them on His command and for His sake.

There is a spirit of light and knowledge flows from Jesus Christ into the souls of believers, that acquaints them with *the mysteries of the kingdom of God*, which cannot otherwise be known.

The more God gives, be still the more humble, and let Him have the return of



more glory, and let it go entire to Him ; it is all His due, and in doing this we shall still grow richer ; for where He sees the most faithful servant, who purloins nothing, but improves all to his Master's advantage, surely him He will trust with most.

Grace finds a way to exert itself in every estate where it exists, and regulates the soul according to the particular duties of that estate. Whether it find a man high or low, a master or a servant, it requires not a change of his station, but works a change on his heart, and teaches him how to live in it. The same spirit that makes a Christian master pious and gentle and prudent in commanding, makes a Christian servant faithful and obsequious and diligent in obeying. A skilful engraver makes you a statue, indifferently of wood, or stone, or marble, as they are put into his hand ; so grace forms a man to a Christian way of walking in any estate. There is a way for him in "

meanest condition to glorify God and adorn the profession of religion ; no estate so low as to be shut out from that ; a rightly informed and a rightly affected conscience towards God shows a man that way, and causes him to walk in it. As the astrologers say that the same stars that made Cyrus to be chosen king amongst the armies of men, when he came to be a man, made him to be chosen king amongst the shepherd's children when he was a child, thus grace will have its proper operation in every estate.

“ Abstain from fleshly lusts.”

It was a very wise abridgment that Epictetus made of philosophy into these two words—*Bear and forbear*.

These are truly the two main duties that the Apostle recommends to his Christian brethren in this epistle. It is one and the same strength of spirit that raises

a man above both the troubles and pleasures of the world, and makes him despise and trample upon both.

In a word, we are to abstain not only from the serving of our flesh in things forbidden, as unjust gain and unlawful pleasure, but also from immoderate desire of and delighting in any earthly thing, although it may be in itself lawfully, yea, necessarily, in some degree, desired and used.

“Whereunto ye were called.”

This in the general ought ever to be before our eyes, to consider the nature and end of our calling, and to endeavour in all things to act suitably to it—to think in every occurrence, what doth the calling of a Christian require of me in this? But the truth is, the most do not mind this.

We profess ourselves to be Christians, and never think what kind of behavior

this obliges us to, and what manner of persons it becomes us to be *in all holy conversation*. *God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness* (1 Thes. iv. 7).

You that are of proud contentious spirit,—do you act suitably to this holy calling? No; for *we are called to peace* says the same apostle (1 Cor. vii. 15).

The particular things that Christians are here said to be called to are *suffering* as their lot, and *patience* as their duty, even under the most unjust and undeserved sufferings.

All that follow Christ must do it in his livery,—they must take up their cross. This is a very harsh and displeasing article of the gospel to a carnal mind, but the Scripture conceals it not. Men are not led blindfolded into sufferings, and drawn into a snare by the invitations of the Gospel. They are told it very often, that they may not pretend a surprisal, nor have any just plea for starting back again. So our Saviour tells his disciples why he

was so express and plain with them in this. "These things have I told you, that ye be not offended" (John xvi. 1). As if he had said, "I have shewn you the ruggedness of your way that you may not stumble at it,—taking it to be a smooth plain one." But then, when this is spoken of, it is usually allayed with the mention of those comforts that accompany those sufferings; or of that glory which follows them. The doctrine of the apostles, which was so verified in their own persons, was this,—"*That we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God*" (Acts xiv. 22). An unpleasant way, indeed, if you look no further; but a kingdom at the end of it, and that the *kingdom of God* will transfuse pleasure into the most painful step in it all. "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous*" (Ps. xxxiv. 14); but that which follows abundantly weighs them down, in consolation that the Lord himself is engaged in their afflictions, both for their deliverance out of them :

due time, and in the mean time for their support and preservation under them. "*The Lord delivers them out of them all,*" and till he does that, "*He keepeth all their bones.*" It is a sweet testament, take it altogether. *Ye shall have tribulation in the world, but peace in me.* The trouble is but *in the world*, but the peace is in Him who weighs down thousands of worlds.

So then they do grievously mistake and misreckon who would reconcile Christ and the world,—they would enjoy both kinds of peace together, but are very loathe to part with the world's peace. They would be Christians, but are very ill-satisfied when they hear of anything but ease and prosperity in that estate.

But *God's thoughts are not as ours*: those whom He calls to a kingdom He calls to sufferings as the way to it. He will have the heirs of heaven know that they are not at home on earth, and that *this is not their rest.*

The more sinful we are, the more need

that our High Priest should be sinless; and, being so, we may build upon his perfection as standing in our stead: yea, we are invested with Him and his righteousness.

Our obligation to follow the example of Christ is enforced by its own excellency. His behaviour was intended for an example,—“*Leaving us an example.*” His whole life is our rule; not indeed his miraculous works—his footsteps walking on the sea, and such-like. They are not for our following; but his obedience, holiness, meekness and humility, are our copy, and what we should continually study. “*He that follows me,*” saith our Lord, “*shall not walk in darkness*” (John viii.12).

He that aims high shoots the higher for it, though he shoots not so high as he aims.

This is what ennobles the spirit of a Christian,—the propounding of this our high pattern, the example of Jesus Christ.
. . . . There is a necessity of a new bein

as the principle of new action and motion. The apostle says, "*While ye served sin ye were free from righteousness*" (Rom. vi. 20). So it is while ye were alive to sin ye were dead to righteousness. But there is a new breath of life from heaven, breathed on the soul: then lives the soul indeed; then it is one with God and sees *light in His light* (Psalm xxxii. 9), hath a spiritual knowledge of Him, and therefore sovereignly loves Him, and delights in His will. And this is indeed to *live unto righteousness*, which, in a comprehensive sense, takes in all the frame of a christian life, and all the duties of it towards God and towards man.

On Death.

That which makes natural death the king of terrors as Job calls it (ch. xviii. 14), is mainly a strange belief and assurance of the resurrection and glory to come;

and without some lively appreciation of this all men's moral resolutions and discourses are too weak cordials against the fear. . . . Nor are the miseries of life a full persuasive to meet death without reluctance : the oldest, the most decrepid, and most diseased persons, yet, naturally, fall not out with life, but could have a mind to it still ; and the very truth is this,—the worst cottage any one dwells in he is loath to go out of until he knows of a better. And the reason why what is so hideous to others was so sweet to martyrs (Heb. xi. 35) and other godly men who have heartily embraced death, and welcomed it, though in very terrible shapes, was, because they had firm assurance of immortality beyond it. To look upon death as eternity's birth-day, is that which makes it not only tolerable, but amiable. *Hic dies postremus æterni natalis est* is the word I admire more than any other that ever dropt from a heathen.

*"The eyes of the Lord are upon the
righteous."*

This phrase expresses his good providence and his readiness to do them good, to supply their wants, and order all their affairs for them, to answer their desires, and thus to let them find the fruits of that love which so leads his eye and ear towards them. "*His eye is upon them.*" "*He prevents them with the blessings of His goodness*" (Psalm xxi. 3.) They cannot be so mindful of themselves as He is of them. This is an unspeakable comfort, when a poor believer is in great perplexity of any kind in his outward or spiritual condition. Well, I see no way ; but there are eyes upon me that see well what is best. The Lord is minding me, and bringing about all to my advantage. "I am poor and needy indeed, but the Lord thinketh upon me." (Psalm xi. 17).

There is a necessity of a new being as the principle of new action and motion.

The apostle says, *While ye served sin ye were free from righteousness* (Rom. vi. 20), so it is while ye were alive to sin, ye were dead to righteousness, but there is a new breath of life from Heaven, breathed on the soul. Then is the soul alive indeed when it is one with God and sees *light in His light*, (Psalm xxxii. 9), hath a spiritual knowledge of Him and therefore sovereignly loves Him, and delights in his will, and this is indeed to *live unto righteousness*, which in a comprehensive sense takes in all the frame of a Christian life and all the duties of it towards God and towards man. It was the design of the sufferings and death of Christ to produce in us this death and life: He bare sin, and died for it, that we might die to it.

Out of some conviction of the consequence of sin many have a confused desire to be justified, to have sin pardoned, who look no further; they think not on the importance and necessity of sanctification, the nature whereof is expressed by *this*

dying to sin and living to righteousness. But here we see that sanctification is necessary, as inseparably connected with justification, not only as its companion, but as its end, which, in some sort, raises it above the other. We see that it was the thing which God eyed and intended, in taking away the guiltiness of sin, that we might be renewed and sanctified. If we compare them in point of time, looking backward, holiness was always necessary unto happiness, but satisfying for sin and the pardon of it were made necessary by sin; or if we look forward, the estate we are appointed to, and for which we are delivered from wrath, is an estate of perfect holiness. When we reflect upon that great work of redemption, we see it aimed at there, "*Redeemed to be holy*" (Eph. v. 25, 26; Tit. xi. 14).

A soul converted is gained to itself—gained to Jesus Christ—added to His treasury who thought not his own precious blood too dear to lay out for this gain.

It is never right in anything with us, till we attain to *this*—to tread upon the opinions of men and eye nothing but God's approbation.

It is a happy life to find the correspondence of these two—*calling on the Lord*, and *departing from iniquity*, (1 Tim. ii. 19). Therefore that you may pray much, live holily, be much in prayer. Surely such are the heirs of glory, and this is their way to it.

1. Beware of two things which often cause divisions,—*captivity to custom*, on the one hand, and *affectation of novelty* on the other.

2. Labour for a staid mind, that will not be tossed with every *wind of doctrine*, or appearance of reason, as some who, like vanes, are easily blown to any side with mistakes of the Scriptures, either arising in their own minds or suggested by others.

3. In unclean and doubtful things, be not pertinacious, as the weakest minds are

readiest to be upon seeming reason, which, when tried, will possibly fall to nothing; yet they are most assured and cannot suffer a different thought in any from their own. There is naturally this *Pope-ness* in every man's mind, and most, I say, in the shallowest; a kind of fancied *infallibility* in themselves, which makes them contentious, contrary to the apostle's rule (Phil. ii. 3), "*Let nothing be done through strife and vain-glory,*" and as earnest upon differing in the smallest punctilio as in a high article of faith. Stronger spirits are usually more patient of contradiction, and less violent, especially in doubtful things, and they who see furthest are least peremptory in their determinations.

The Apostle in his second epistle to Timothy, hath a word, *the spirit of a sound mind*; it is a good, sound constitution of mind, not to feel every blast, either of seeming reason, to be taken with it, or of ~~cross~~ opinion to be offended at it. . . .

No more disaffection ought to follow from difference of opinion than from difference of our faces and complexion, or feature of body, which cannot be found in any two alike in all things.

4. And these things would be of easier persuasion, if we considered, first, how supple and flexible a thing human reason is, and therefore, not lightly to be trusted to, especially in divine things, for here *we know but in part* (1 Cor. xiii. 9). And a great many of those debates which cost men so much pains and time are as far from clear decision as when they began, and are possibly of so little moment that, if they were ended, their profit would not quit the cost. Secondly, consider the strength of Christian charity, which if it dwelt much in our hearts, would preserve this union of mind amidst very many different thoughts, such as they may be, and would teach us the excellent lesson the apostle gives us to this purpose,—“*Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus*

minded : and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Phil. iii. 15). Let us follow our Lord unanimously in what He hath clearly manifested to us ; as the spheres, notwithstanding each one hath its particular motion, yet all are wheeled about together with the first.

On Unity.

In the defence of the truth, as the Lord shall call us, let us be of one mind, and all as one man. Satan acts by that maxim, and all his followers have it, *Divide and conquer !* and therefore let us hold that counter maxim, *Union invincible.*

In the practice of that truth agree as one. Let your conversation be uniform, by being squared to that one rule, and in all spiritual exercises join as one ; *be of one heart and mind.*

Sin broke all to pieces, man from God, and men from one another. Christ's work in the world was *union*. To make up these breaches He came down, and began the union which was His work, in the wonderful union made in his person that was to work it, making God and man, one. And as the nature of man was reconciled, so by what He performed the persons of men are united to God. Faith makes them one with Christ, and He makes them one with the Father. . . . And this was his great work we may read in his prayer, John xvii., where it is the burden and main strain, the great request He so reiterates, "*that they may be one as we are one*"—a high comparison, such as man durst not name but after Him who so warrants us! And again, "*That they all may be one, as Thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.*"

So that certainly where this exists it is the groundwork of another kind of friend-

ship and love than the world is acquainted with, or is able to judge of, and hath more worth in one drachm of it than all the quintessence of love and natural affection can amount to. The friendships of the world, the best of them, are but tied with chains of glass; but the fraternal love of Christians is a golden chain both more precious and more strong and lasting: others are worthless and brittle.

The Christian owes and pays a general good-will and charity to all; but peculiar and intimate friendship he cannot have, except with such as come within the compass of this fraternal love which after a special manner flows from God, and returns to Him and abides in Him, and shall remain unto eternity. But many who are called Christians are not indeed of this brotherhood, and therefore no wonder they know not what this love means. These are strangers to Christ, not brought into acquaintance and union with Him, and therefore void of the life

of grace and the fruits of it, whereof this is a chief one.

Common knowledge and gifts may *puff up*, but *grace* does not. . . . He whom the Lord loads most with his richest gifts, stoops lowest, as pressed down with the weight of them. *Ille est qui superbire nescit, cui Deus astendit misericordiam suam* ; the free love of God humbles that heart most to which it is most manifested.

And towards men humility graces all grace and all gifts ; it glorifies God and teaches others to do so. It is *conservatrix virtutum*, the preserver of graces. Sometimes it seems to wrong them by hiding them ; but indeed, it is their safety. Hezekiah by a vain showing of his jewels and treasures forfeited them all, *Prodendo perdidit*.

Opposition helps grace both to more strength and more lustre. When Christian charity is not encountered by the world's malignity, it hath an easier task ; but assaulted and overcoming, it shines

the brighter and rises the higher ; and thus it is when it *renders not evil for evil*.

When so many talents are forgiven me, shall I stick at forgiving a few pence ?

When a man is to remove from all he hath possessed and rejoiced in here, then *fool* indeed if nothing be provided for the longer—oh how much longer !—abode he must make elsewhere ! Will he not then bewail his madness that he was hunting a shadow all his lifetime ?

“ For he that will have life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile.”—
(1 Pet. iii. 10.)

A guileful heart makes a guileful tongue and lips. It is the workhouse where is the forge of deceit and slander and other evil speakings ; and the tongue is only the outer shop where they are vended, and the lips the door of it ; so then, such ware as is made within, such,

and no other, can be set out. From evil thoughts evil speaking, from a profane heart profane words, and from a deceitful heart guileful words, well varnished, but lined with rottenness.

If thou art inured to oaths or cursing, or any kind or fashion of it, taking the *great name of God* any way in vain, do not favour thyself in it, as a small offence; to excuse it by custom, is to wash thyself with ink, and to prove that thou art long accustomed in that sin is to accuse thyself deeper. If thou wouldst indeed be delivered from it, seek for a due knowledge of the majesty of God, and thence a deep reference of Him in thy heart. . . .

Be choice in your society; *sit not with vain persons* (Ps. xxvi. 4), whose tongues have nothing else to utter but malice and folly. Men readily learn the dialect and tone of the people amongst whom they live. If you sit down in the chair of scorers you will quickly take a share of their diet with them. . . . Use a little of the bridle in the quantity

speech. He is wise that hath learned to speak little with others and much with himself and with God. How much might be gained for our souls if we made a right use of this silence. . . . So David, dumb to man found his tongue to God (Ps. xxxviii. 13, 15). A spiritually-minded man is quickly weary of other discourse but of that which he loves, and wherewith his affection is possessed and taken up.

Incline a little rather to sparing than lavishing, for *in many words there wants not sin.*

It is an argument of a candid ingenuous mind to delight in the good name and commendation of others; to pass by their defects, and take notice of their virtues; and to speak and hear of those willingly, and not endure either to speak or hear of the other; for in this, indeed, you may be little less guilty than the evil speaker in taking pleasure in it, though you speak it not.

Discourses seek not so much to

vent thy knowledge or increase it, as to seek to know more spiritually and effectually what thou dost know.

“ Let him eschew evil and do good ; let him seek peace and ensue it.” — (1 Pet. iii. 11).

The right avoidance of evil involves a right and wary avoidance of all occasions and beginnings of it. . . . They that are bold and adventurous are often wounded. Thus *he that removeth stones shall be hurt thereby* (Eccles. x. 9). If we know our own weakness and the strength of sin, we shall fear to expose ourselves to hazards, and be willing even to abridge ourselves of some things lawful when they prove dangerous ; for he that will do always all he lawfully may, shall often do something that lawfully he may not.

The main thing is to be inwardly principled ; to have a heart stamped with the love of God and his commandments to do

all for conscience of his will, and love to Him and desire of his glory. And upon this will follow a constant track and course of obedience, moving directly contrary to the stream of wickedness about a man, and also against the bent of his own corrupt heart within him; a serious desire and endeavour to do all the good that is within our calling and reach, but especially that particular good of our calling, that which is in our hand and is peculiarly required of us. And in this some deceive themselves; they look upon such a condition, as they imagine, were fit for them; or, such as is in their eye, when they look upon others, and they think if they were such persons, and had such a place and such power and opportunities, they would do great matters, and in the meantime they neglect that good to which they are called, and which they have in some measure power and place to do.

And was not this Paul's condition? Was not this his malady? *When I would do*

good, evil is present with me (Rom. vii. 21). But know at once that though thy duty is this, *to eschew evil and do good*, yet thy salvation is more surely founded than on thine own good. That perfection which answers to justice and the law, is not required of thee. Thou art to *walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*; in so walking, whether in a low or high degree, still thy comfort lieth in this, that, "*there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,*" as the apostle begins the next chapter (Rom. viii.) after his sad complaints. Again: consider his thoughts in the close of the 8th chapter, on perceiving the work of God in himself, and distinguishing that from the corrupt motions of nature, and so finding at once matter of heavy complaint, and yet of cheerful exultation, "Oh wretched man that I am," and yet with the same breath—"Thanks to God through Christ Jesus our Lord."

So then mourn with him and yet re-

joyce with him, and go on with courage as he did, still *fighting the good fight of faith*.

When thou fallest into the mire be ashamed and humbled, yet, return and wash in the fountain opened, and return and beg fresh strength to *walk more surely*. Learn to trust thyself less, and God more, and up and be doing against thy enemies, how tall and mighty soever be the sons of Anak. *Be of good courage* and the Lord shall be with thee, and *shall strengthen thy heart* and stablish thy goings.

Do not lie down to rest because thou art out of the puddle of common profaneness; but look further to cleanse thyself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. vii. 1).

Do not think thy little is enough, or that thou hast reason to despair of attaining more; but press, *press hard toward the mark and prize of thy high calling*. (Phil. iii. 14).

1. Seek a holy heart ; entertain a constant care and study of holiness ; admit no parley with sin.

2. Seek a broken heart, the Lord is ever at hand to that. He is nigh to them that are of a contrite spirit, (Psalm xxxiv. 18).

3. Seek an humble heart that may present its suit always ; the great King loves to make his abode in it, (Isa. lvii. 15), this is the thing the Lord delights in and requires. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God. He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.* He cannot agree with a proud heart. The humble heart only is company for God, hath liberty to walk and converse with Him. “ *He gives grace to the humble.* ”

There must be no regarding of iniquity —no entertaining of friendship with any

sin, but a permanent love and desire of holiness. Thus indeed a man prays within himself as in a sanctified place, whither the Lord's ear inclines, as of old in the temple. He needs not run superstitiously to a church. *Intra te ora, sed vide prius an sis templum Dei.*—Pray inwardly, but first see whether thou art thyself a temple of God.

The sanctified man's body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, as the apostle speaks (1 Cor. vi. 19), and his soul is the priest in it that offers sacrifice.

It must be a believing heart; for there is no praying without this.

Faith is the very life of prayer. . . .
See and feel thine own unworthiness as much as thou canst, for thou art never bidden to believe in thyself; no, that is countermanded as faith's great enemy. But what hath thy unworthiness to say against free promises of grace, which are the basis of thy faith? So then believe that you may pray—this is David's advice

(Psalm vii.8)—“Trust in Him at all times ye people,” and then “pour out your hearts before Him.” Confide in God as a most faithful and powerful friend, and then you will open your hearts to Him.

On the manner of offering up Prayer.

It is a great thing—much is to be considered, but for the present take these advices briefly.

Offer not to speak to Him without the heart, in some measure, seasoned and prepossessed with the sense of his greatness and holiness. And there is much in this, considering wisely to whom we speak, the King, the Lord of glory, and setting the soul before Him, in his presence; and then reflecting on ourselves, and seeing what we are—how wretched, and base, and filthy, and unworthy of access to so great a Majesty. The want of this pre-

paring of the heart to speak in the Lord's ear, by the consideration of God and ourselves, is what fills the soul with much guiltiness; makes the heart careless and slight and irreverent, and so displeases the Lord, and disappoints ourselves of that comfort, in prayer, and those answers of it, of which, else, we should have some experience.

We rush in before Him with anything, and do not weigh these things, and compose our hearts with serious thoughts and conceptions of God. This would fill the soul with awe and reverence; to consider the Lord as the prophet saw Him, sitting on his throne and all the host of heaven standing by Him, on his right hand and on his left, (1 Kings xxii. 19), and thyself a defiled sinner, coming before Him; how would this fill thee with holy fear! oh his greatness and our baseness!—oh the distance!

This is Solomon's advice:—

“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not

thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God : for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth ; therefore let thy words be few." (Eccl. v. 2).

When thou addresseth thyself to prayer, desire and depend upon the assistance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, without which thou art not able truly to pray. It is a supernatural work, and therefore the principle of it must be supernatural. He that hath nothing of the Spirit of God cannot pray at all; he may howl, as a beast, in his necessity or distress, or may speak words of prayer, as some birds learn the language of men; but pray he cannot. And they that have that Spirit ought to seek the movings and actual workings of it in them in prayer, as the particular help of their infirmities, teaching both what to ask (a thing which of ourselves we know not), and then enabling them to ask, breathing forth their desires in such sighs and groans as are the breath, not simply of their own, but of God's Spirit.

Strive in prayer to keep a watchful eye over your own hearts throughout, that they start not out. And in order to do this, strive to keep up a continual remembrance of the presence of God. . . . They that are most inspective and watchful in this will still be faulty in it; but certainly the less watchful the more faulty. And this we ought to do,—to be aspiring daily to more stability of mind in prayer, and to be driving out somewhat of that raving and wandering which is so universal an evil.

This is no small part of our misery here; these wanderings are evidence to us that we are not at home; and sometimes a Christian may be driven to think, “What, shall I still do thus,—abusing my Lord’s name, and the privilege he has given me?” I had better leave off,—no, not so by any means. Strive against the miserable evil that is within thee; but cast not away thy happiness: be doing still. Thou mayest come off as Jacob did, with *halting* from

thy *wrestlings*, and yet obtain the blessing for which thou wrestlest.

Those graces which are the due qualities of the heart, disposing it to prayer, should be exerted and acted as holiness, the love of it, the desire of increase in it, and so the humbling and melting of the heart.

And for access in prayer, exercising faith in it, it is altogether necessary to interpose the Mediator, and to look through Him, and to speak and petition by Him who warns us of this, that there is no other way to speak. No man cometh to the Father but by me (John xiv. 6). . . .

Seek fervently—not coldly—that presages refusal. There must be fire in the sacrifice, otherwise it ascends not. There is no sacrifice without incense, and no incense without fire. . . . That prayer which is in the *right* strain cannot be too fervent in anything ; but the desire of the thing in temporals may be too earnest. . . . In spiritual things, there is no danger of vehemency of desire.

Covet the hunger and thirst for them; be incessantly ardent in the suit, yet with a reference and resignation to the wisdom and love of our Father.

As to the other point, which is the answer of our Prayers.

Slothful minds do often neglect the answers of God, even when they are most legible in the granting of the very thing itself that was desired.

It may be, through never thinking of things as answers to our requests, or, possibly, a continual, eager, pursuit of money turns away the mind from considering what it hath, upon request, obtained. We are still so bent upon what further we would have, that we never think what is already done for us, which is one of the most ordinary causes of ingratitude. . . . But, though it be not in the same thing that we desire, that our prayers are answered, yet, when the Lord changes our

petitions in his answers, it is always for the better. He regards, according to that known word of Augustine: "*Si non ad voluntatem ad utilitatem,*"—our *well* more than our *will*.

We beg deliverances; we are not unanswered if He give patience, and support. Be it indeed a spiritual trial, and temptation—*My grace is sufficient for thee*.

Observe here—*His ears are open to the righteous*, but *his eye is upon them too*. They have not so his ear, as to induce Him blindly to give them what they ask, whether it be fit or no; but *his eye is on them*, to see and consider their estate, and to know better than themselves what is best, and accordingly to answer. This is no prejudice, but a great privilege, and the happiness of his children, that they have a Father who knows what is fit for them, and *withholds no good thing* from them. Only this we should always remember, not to set bounds and limits to the Lord in point of time; not to set Him

a day that thou wilt attend so long and no longer. . . .

How patiently will some men bestow long attendance on others, where they expect some very small good or courtesy at their hands! Yet we are very brisk and hasty with Him who never delays us, but for our good, to ripen those mercies for us which we, as foolish children, would pluck while they are green, and have neither that sweetness nor goodness in them, which they shall have in his time. All his works are done in their season. He is a King well worth waiting on; and there is in the very waiting on Him an honour and a happiness far above us. . . . Never yet any repented their waiting, but found it fully recompensed with the opportune answer, in such a time as they were then forced to confess was the only best. "*I waited patiently,*" says the Psalmist, "*in waiting, I waited,*" but it was all well bestowed. *He inclined to me and heard my cry, brought me up, &c.* (Psal. xl. 1).

Let the Lord's open ear persuade us to make much use of prayer—" *Clavis diei et sera noctis*,"—the key of day and the lock of night. Be much in this sweet and holy exercise of prayer, together and apart. It is due to God to be worshipped and acknowledged thus as the fountain of good (Acts xvii. 25).

Consider the dignity of this poor wretched man, to be admitted into heaven while he is on earth, and there to come and speak his mind freely to the Lord of heaven and earth,—as his friend,—as his Father ; to empty all his complaints into his bosom ; when wearied with the follies and miseries of the world, to refresh his soul in his God.

Happiness the result of Holiness.

The main conclusion is that happiness is the certain consequent and fruit of holi-

ness. If we did believe this more, we should feel it more; and so upon feeling and experiment believe it more strongly. The heavy judgments we feel and fear, are they not the fruit of our own ways—of abounding ungodliness? All cry out of hard times, evil days; and yet, who is taking the right way to better them? Yea, who is not still helping to make them worse? Are we not ourselves the greatest enemies of our own peace. Who looks either rightly backward, reflecting on his former ways; or rightly forward, to direct better his way that is before him? Who says, "*What have I done?*" (Jer. vii. 6), and "*What ought I to do?*" (Acts xvi. 30.) "Future determination springs from the past."

"*I considered my ways,*" says David, "turned them over and over," (as the word is) and then I turned my feet unto thy testimonies (Psalm cxix. 59).

Who is *eschewing evil and doing good*, labouring to *bring forth much fruit to God?*

This were the way to see *good days*, indeed this is the way to the longest life, the only long life, one eternal day. As Augustine comments on those words, "*One day in thy courts is better than a thousand*," (Psalm lxxxiv): "Men desire thousands of days and wish to live long here; rather let them despise thousands of days, and desire that one which hath neither dawn nor darkening, in which no yesterday gives place, which yields to no morrow."

In the Scriptures we find, besides general rules, the particular tracks of life of divers eminent, holy persons, and those on purpose set before us, that we may know holiness not to be an idle imaginary thing, but that men have really been holy, though not altogether sinless, yet holy and spiritual in some good measure; have shined as lights amidst a perverse generation, as greater stars in a dark night, and were yet men, as St. James says of Elias, like us in nature (*ὁ νοῦς καθεύκει*) and

in the frailty of it. Subject to like passions as we are, (James v. 17.) Why then may we not aspire to be holy, as they were, and attain to it? Although we should fall short of the degree, yet not stopping at a small measure, but running further, *pressing still forward towards the mark*; following them in the way they went, though at a distance; not reaching them, it may be, and yet walking, yea, running after them as fast as we can. Not judging of holiness by our own sloth and natural averseness, taking it for a singularity fit only for rare extraordinary persons, such as prophets and apostles were, or as the Church of Rome fancies those to be to whom it vouchsafes a place on the roll of saints.

Do you not know that holiness is the only *via regia*, this follow—the path wherein *all* the children of God must walk. This is, amongst many others, a misconceit in the Church of Rome, that they seem to make holiness a kind of improprie good,

which the common sort can have little share in, almost all piety being shut up within cloister walls, as its only fit dwelling ; but it hath not liked their lodging, it seems it has flown over the walls away from them ; for there is little of it, even there, to be found. Their opinion, however, as having little to do abroad in the world ; whereas the truth is, that all Christians have this for their *constant* task.

Look on the rule of holiness and be followers of it, and followers and imitators one of another, so far as their carriage agrees with that primitive copy as written after it. "*Be ye followers of me,*" *μιμηται*, says the apostle even to the meanest Christians amongst those to whom he wrote ; but thus,—"*as I am of Christ,*" (1 Cor. ii. 1.) And in Him we have that highest example made low, and yet losing nothing of its perfection ; so that we may study God in man, and read all our lesson, without any blot, even in our own nature. In Him we may learn all. "Learn of me ·

for I am meek and lowly of heart" (Matt. xi. 29). But this is too large a subject. Would you advance in all grace? Study Christ much, and you shall find not only the pattern in Him, but strength and skill from Him to follow it. Then the advantage of it. It is a good worthy following for its own sake. But there is this further, it oftentimes cuts off the occasions of present evils and disturbances, which otherwise are incident to man. "*Who is he that will harm you?*" Men, even evil men, will often be overcome by your blameless and harmless behaviour.

How often are the lusts, and pride, and covetousness of worldly men paid with troubles, and dangers, and vexations, which, besides what is abiding them hereafter, even in this present life, spring out of them! These the godly pass free of, by their just, and mild, and humble carriage. Whence so many wars and strifes among the greatest part, but from their unchris-

tion hearts and lives, *from their lusts that war in their members*, as the Apostle James says, their self-love and unmortified passions? One will abate nothing of *his* will, nor another of *his*. Thus where pride and passion meet on both sides, it cannot be but a fire will be kindled; when hard flints strike together it cannot be but the sparks fly about; but a soft, mild spirit is a great preserver of its own peace, as wool-packs, or such-like soft matter, most deaden the force of bullets, as, says Solomon, *a soft answer turns away wrath*.

Know that you must row against the stream of wickedness, or be carried with it to the Dead Sea—the sea of perdition. Take the grave counsel given, Rom. xii. 2, “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind;” this is the daily advancement in renovation, purifying and refining every day.

Now in this way you shall have sweet inward peace and joy, as well as some

outward advantage, in that men, except they are monstrously cruel and malicious, will not so readily harm you ; it will abate much of their rage. But, however, if you do not escape suffering by your holy carriage, yea, if you *suffer* even for it, in that are ye happy, as the Apostle immediately adds : “ *But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, neither be terrified.*”

Many winter blasts will meet you in the most inoffensive way of religion if you keep straight to it. Suffering and war with the world is a part of the godly man’s portion here, which seems hard, but take it altogether it is sweet. None in their wits will refuse that legacy entire. “ *In the world ye shall have trouble, but in me ye shall have peace*” (John xvi).

All the sufferings and distresses of the world are not able to destroy the happiness of a Christian. . . . If it were built on worldly enjoyments, then worldly privations and sufferings might shake it,

yea, might undo it ; when these rotten props fall, that which rests on them must fall. He that hath set his heart on his riches, a few hours may make him miserable. He that lives on popular applause, it is almost in any one's power to rob him of his happiness ; a slight or disgrace undoes him. Or whatsoever the soul fixes on of these moving, unfixed things, pluck them from it, and it must cry after them, "*Ye have taken away my gods.*" But the believer's happiness is safe out of the reach of shot. . . . If friends be taken away, yet the visits of the Comforter may be frequent, bringing him glad tidings from Heaven, and communing with him of the love of Christ, and solacing him in that. It was a great word for a heathen to say of his false accusers, "*Kill me they may, but they cannot hurt me.*" How much more confidently may the Christian say so ! Banishment he fears not, for his country is above ; nor death, for that sends him home into that country.

The believing soul having hold of Jesus Christ can easily despise the best and the worst of the world, and defy all that is in it—can share with the Apostle in that defiance which he gives :—“ *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,*” (Rom. viii. 39). . . . It is the happiness of a Christian until he attain perfection to be advancing towards it, to be daily refining from sin, and growing richer and stronger in the grace that marks a Christian a new creature; more weaned from the earth and fixed on heaven. . . . Now as other afflictions of the saints do help them in these their sufferings for righteousness’ sake, the unrighteous and injurious dealings of the world with them have a particular fitness for this purpose. Those trials that come immediately from

God's own hand, seem, with more authority, to bind us to a patient and humble compliance; there is no plea, no place, even for a word, unless it be expressly against the Lord's own dealings. But unjust suffering at the hands of man requires, that respect unto God (without whose hand they cannot move) that for his sake, and for reverence and love to Him, a Christian can go through them with that mild evenness of spirit which overcomes, even in suffering, and there is nothing outward more fit to persuade a man to give up with the world, and its friendship, than to feel much of its enmity and malice, and if the world should caress and smile on them, they might be ready to forget their home, or at least to abate in the frequent thoughts and fervent desires of it. Persecuted Christians are happy in acting and evidencing, by those sufferings for God, their love to Him. . . . The more a Christian suffers for Christ, the more he loves Him. The

world cannot but misjudge the state of suffering Christians; it sees, as St. Bernard speaks, their crosses, but not their anointings, —“*Vident cruces nostras, unctiones non vident.*”

Sin destroys, Faith restores composure.

Sin hath put the soul into universal disorder, so that it neither loves nor hates what it ought, nor as it ought; hath neither right joy, nor sorrow, nor hope, nor fear. A very small matter stirs and troubles it. “*A troubled sea as it cannot rest,*” so, in its restlessness, *it casts up mire*, as the prophet speaks (Isa. lvii. 20).

Thus it is with the unrenewed heart of man; the least blasts that arise disturb it and make it restless, and its own impurity makes it cast up mire. Yea, it is never right with the natural man; either he is asleep in carnal confidence, or being shaken out of that he is hurried and

troubled, tossed to and fro, with carnal fears, he is either in a lethargy or a fever, and trembling again.

On the other hand, Faith carries the soul above all doubts, assures it that, if suffering, or sickness, or death come, nothing can separate it from God. Faith sets the soul in God, and where is safety if it be not there? It rests on these persuasions it hath concerning Him, and that interest it hath in Him. Faith believes that He sits and rules the affairs of the world with an all-seeing eye, and an all-moving hand. The greatest affairs surcharge him not, and the very smallest escape him not. He orders the march of armies, the event of battles; and yet thou, and thy particular condition, slip not out of his view. *The very hairs of thy head are numbered.* Thou mayst assure thyself, that, however thy matters seem to go, all is contrived to subserve thy good, thy chief and highest good. There is a regular motion in them, though the wheels do

seem to run cross. "*All these things are against me,*" said old Jacob, and yet they were all for him. In all estates, I know of no heart's ease but to believe, to sanctify and honour thy God in resting on his word.

The soul that hath the deepest sense of spiritual things, and the truest knowledge of God, is most afraid to miscarry in speaking of Him, most tender and wary how to acquit itself when engaged to speak of and for God.

To set the outward actions right, though with an honest intention, and not so to regard and find out, the inward disorder of the heart, whence that in the actions flows, is but to be still putting the index of a clock right with your finger, while it is foul and out of order within, which is a continual business, and does no good; but a purified conscience, a soul renewed and refined, in its temper and affections, will make things go right within, in all the duties and acts of our calling. The

principle of good in both, is Christ. Your good conversation in Christ. The conversation is not good except in Him, so neither is the conscience; the believer looks on his Christ, and in Him reads his deliverance from condemnation, and that is a strong comfort, a cordial that keeps him from fainting in the greatest distresses. When the conscience gives this testimony that sin is forgiven, it raises the soul above outward suffering. Tell the Christian of loss of goods, or liberty, or friends, he answers all with this: "Christ is mine and my sin is pardoned, that is enough for me." . . . One thought of eternity drowns the whole time of the world's duration, which is but as one instant or twinkling of an eye betwixt eternity before and eternity after; how much is any short life; yea, how much is it, though it were all suffering (which it is not): when I look forward to the crown, all vanishes, and I think it *less than nothing*.

“For Christ also hath once suffered.”

Though the doctrine of Christian suffering is here the occasion of the apostle speaking of Christ's suffering, yet he insists on it beyond the simple necessity of that argument, for its own excellency, and for further usefulness. First, as an encouragement and engagement for Christians to suffer,—secondly, the due consideration of Christ's sufferings doth much temper all the suffering of Christians; especially such as are directly for Christ.

No temptation hath befallen you but what is common to men (1 Cor. x. 13). If we trace the lives of the most eminent saints, shall we not find almost every notable step that is recorded marked with a new cross, one trouble following on another, *velut unda pellitur unda*, as the waves do, in an incessant succession. Is not this manifest in the lives of Abraham

and of Jacob, and the rest of God's worthies in the Scriptures? Would any one have a new untrodden way cut out for him, free of thorns, and strewed with flowers all along? Does he expect to meet with no contradiction from the world, or imagine that there may be such a dexterity necessary as to keep its good will and the friendship of God too? This will not be; it is a universal conclusion. *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution* (2 Tim. iii. 12). This is the path to the kingdom, that which all the sons of God, the heirs of it, have gone in, even Christ, according to that well-known word "One son without sin, but not one without suffering," *Christ also suffered.*

There is a race set before us,—it is to be run, and run with patience, and without fainting. Now he tells us of a cloud of witnesses, a cloud made up of instances of believers suffering before us; the heat of the day, wherein we run, is somewhat

cooled even by that cloud compassing us, but the main strength of our comfort lies in *looking to Jesus*. The considering and contemplating of Him will be the strongest cordial—will keep you from *wearying* and fainting in the way. . . . Art thou mean in thy birth and life, despised, misjudged, and reviled on all hands? Look how it was with Him who had more right than thou hast, to better entertainment in the world. Thou wilt not deny it was his own, *it was made by Him*, and He was in it, and it *knew Him not*. Are thy friends much to thee? *He came to his own and his own received him not*. Hast thou a mean cottage?—Art thou every way poor and ill-accommodated? He was as poor as thou canst be, and *had not where to lay his head*. . . . Thou art His servant, and dost thou think to be greater than thy Master, to be exempt from his lot in the world? Thou art his soldier, and wilt thou refuse to follow Him, and endure with Him. “*Suffer hardship*,” says the

apostle to Timothy, "*as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,*" (2 Tim. ii. 3).

Consider the efficacy of Christ's suffering. *He suffered once for sin*, so that to those, who lay hold on Him, this holds sure,—that sin is never to be suffered for in the way of strict justice again as not by Him, so not by those who are in Him, for *He suffered for sins once*, and it was for your sins,—for every poor believer's. So now the soul finding itself rid of that fear goes cheerfully through all other hazards and sufferings; whereas, the soul perplexed about that question, finds no relief in all other enjoyments. Tell it of peace and prosperity. Say what you will of these, he still asks, What do you mean by this? These things answer not to me. Do you think I can find comfort in them so long as my sin is unpardoned, and there is a sentence of eternal death standing above my head? And though I should be senseless and feel nothing of this all my life, yet how soon shall I have done

with it, and the delights that reach no further? And then to have *everlasting burnings*, an eternity of wrath to enter into. On the contrary, he that hath got but a view of Christ, and reads his own pardon in Christ's sufferings, can rejoice in this, in the midst of all other sufferings, and look on death without apprehension ; yea, with gladness, for *the sting is out*. Christ hath made all pleasant to him by this one thing, that He *suffered once for sin*.

The pardoned man finds himself light, skips and leaps, and, *through Christ strengthening him*, can encounter any trouble.

Let us learn to consider more deeply, and esteem more highly, Christ and his suffering, to silence our grumbling at our petty light crosses, for so they are in comparison of his. Will not the great odds of his perfect innocence, and of the nature and measure of his sufferings,—will not the sense of the redemption of

our souls from death by his death,—will none of these, nor all of them, argue us into more thankfulness and love to Him, and patience in our trials? Why will we then be called Christians?

The evil of sin hath the evil of punishment inseparably connected with it. We are under a natural obligation of obedience to God, and He justly urges it; so that where the *command* of his law is broken, the *curse* of it presently followeth. And though it was simply in the power of the supreme Lawgiver to have dispensed with the infliction; yet, having in his wisdom purposed to be known a just God in that way, following forth the tenor of his law, there must of necessity be a suffering for sin.

Thus, too, the angels who kept not their station, falling from it, fell into a dungeon, where they are *under chains of darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day* (Jude 6). Man also fell under the sentence of death; but in this is the difference between man and them,—they were not

one of them as the parent or common root of the rest, but each one fell and stood for himself alone, so a part of them only perished ; but man fell altogether, so that not one of all the race could escape condemnation, unless some other way of satisfaction be found out. And here it is : — *Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. Father, says He, I have glorified thee on the earth,* (John xvii. 8). In this do all the divine attributes shine in their full lustre, infinite mercy, and immense justice, and power and wisdom. . . .

But what shall they think who have no assurance, they who doubt that Christ is theirs, and that He suffered for their sins ? I know no way but to believe on Him, and then you shall know that He is yours. . . . He is set before sinners as a Saviour who hath suffered for sin, that they may look to Him and be saved, that they may lay their souls on Him, and then they may be assured He suffered for them.

Thus may a believing soul, at the lowest, when to its own sense, it is given over unto death, and swallowed up of it, yet look up to this divine power.

He whose soul was not left in hell will not leave thee there. Yea! when thou art most sunk in thy sad apprehensions, and far off to thy thinking, then is He nearest to raise and comfort thee, as sometimes it grows darkest immediately before day. Rest on his power and goodness, which never failed any who did so. . . . Would any of you be cured of that common disease, the fear of death? Look this way, and you shall find more than you seek; you shall be taught not only not to fear, but to love it: thou who receivest Christ as thy life mayst be sure of this,—that thou art by his death freed from the second death.

Descendit huc vita nostra, et tulit mortem nostram et occidit eam de abundantia vite suæ; “He who is, our life,” says Augustine, “descended hither, and bore

our death, killing it by the abounding of his life." *And this is the great point.*

By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison (1 Peter iii. 19).

Without this Spirit,—that is the Spirit of Christ—there is no preaching. . . . All who bring aright the doctrine of saving wisdom, derive it necessarily from Him ; all preachers draw from this sovereign Preacher, as the fountain of divine light. As all the planets derive their light from the sun, and by that diffusing itself among them it is not diminished in the sun, but only communicated to them, remaining still full and entire in it, as its source ; thus doth the Spirit flow from Christ, in a particular degree, unto those He sends forth in his name, and it is in them that He preaches by the power and light of his eternal Spirit.

Hither, then, must all those come who would be rightly supplied and enabled for

that work. It is impossible to speak duly of Him in any measure, but by his Spirit, there must be particular access, and a receiving of instructions from Him, and a transfusion of his Spirit into ours. Oh, were it thus with us, how sweet were it to speak of Him ! To be much in prayer, much in dependence on Him, and drawing from Him, would do much more in this than reading and studying, seeking after, arts and tongues, and common knowledge.

These indeed are not to be despised nor neglected. "Reading is good and learning good," says St. Bernard ; "but above all, *anointing* is necessary, that anointing that *teacheth all things*."

And you who are for your own interest, be earnest with this Lord, this Fountain of the Spirit, to let forth more of it upon his messengers.

Yet how many are there who have been sorely lashed with divers scourges, in their bodies and their families, and yet are

never a whit nearer God for it; all their hearts, still proud and earthly, and vain as ever! And let Him lay on ever so much, they will still be the same. Only a divine virtue going forth from *Christ lifted up* draws men unto Him. He brings them unto the Father.

You who are still strangers to God, who declare yourselves to be so, by living as strangers far off from Him, do not still continue to abuse yourselves so grossly. Can you think any consolation yours that arises from the sufferings of Christ, while it is so evident they have not gained their end upon you, have not brought you to God? Truly most of you seem to think that our Lord Jesus suffered rather to the end we might neglect God and disobey Him securely than to restore us to Him. Hath He purchased you a liberty to sin? or is not deliverance from sin, which alone is true liberty, the thing He aimed at, and agreed for; and laid down his life for?

Those who are brought unto God, and received into friendship with Him, entertain that friendship, they delight in his company, love to be much with Him ; is it so with us ? By being so near, they become like unto Him, know his will better every day, and grow more conformable to it.

The true life of a Christian is to eye Christ, in every step of his life, both as his rule and as his strength, looking to Him as his pattern both in doing and suffering, and drawing power from Him for going through both ; for the look of Faith doth that, fetches life from Jesus. . . . Was He our Head crowned with thorns, and shall the body look for garlands ? Are we redeemed from hell and condemnation by Him, and can any such refuse any service He calls them to ? They who "*are washed in the blood of the Lamb will follow Him whithersoever He goes*" (Rev. xiv. 4) ; and following Him through, they shall find the

journey's end overpay all the troubles and sufferings of the way.

“ When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah ” (1 Pet. iii. 20).

There are two main continuing wonders in the world—the bounty of God and the disloyalty of man. One grand example of this is here set before us, an œcumenical example of this, as large as the world; on the part of God much patience, and yet on man's part invincible disobedience. There are two things in the instance: 1st, the Lord's general dealing with the world of the ungodly at that time; 2ndly, his peculiar way with his own chosen, Noah and his family; He waited patiently for all the rest, but He effectually saved them. The time designated thus, *“ in the days of Noah.”* There were many great and powerful persons in those days, who overtopped Noah, no doubt, in outward

respects, as in their stature, the proud giants. And they begat children, *mighty men of old, men of renown*, as the text hath it (Gen. vi. 4); and yet, as themselves perished in the flood, so their names are drowned. . . . But the name and remembrance of the righteous is still sweet and delightful; as the names of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and those of Isaac and Jacob, their names are embalmed indeed, so that they cannot rot. Certain it is that they who pass for fools in this world are the only children of wisdom; they who have renounced their lusts and their own wills, have yielded up themselves to Jesus, taking Him for their king, and have their minds resting on Him as their salvation.

The promises made to the godly, of preservation from common judgments, have their truth, and are made good in many of them, who are so preserved, though they do not hold absolutely and universally. For they are ever to be understood in

subordination to their highest good ; but when they are preserved, they ought to take it as a gracious accomplishment even of these promises to them, which the wicked, many of whom do likewise escape, have no right to, but are preserved for after-judgment.

The full and clear distinction between the godly and the wicked being reserved for their after-estate in eternity, it needs not seem strange that in many things it appears not here.

One thing, above all others most grievous to the child of God, may take away the wonder of other things they suffer in common ; that is, the remainders of sin in themselves while they are in the flesh ; though there is a spirit in them above it, and contrary to it, which makes the difference, yet, sometimes the too much likeness, especially in the prevailings of corruption, doth confuse the matter not only to other's eyes, but to their own. . . . And, though the great distinction and severing

be reserved to that great and solemn day which shall clear all, yet the Lord is pleased, in part, more remarkably at some times to distinguish his own from the ungodly, in the execution of temporal judgments, and to give them as preludes of the final and full judgment. The instance of Noah was one of the most eminent in this kind.

“ Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience.”

We would willingly have all religion reduced to externals, this is our natural choice ; and we would pay all in this coin, as cheaper and easier by far, and would compound for the spiritual part, rather to add and give more external performance and ceremony. Hence the natural complacency in Popery, which is all for this service, of the flesh and body services, will deal so liberally with Him in that kind, as to add more aid, have new devices and sites,

what you will, in this kind, sprinklings and washings, and anointings and incense. But whither tends all this? Is it not a gross mistaking of God to think Him thus pleased? Or is it not a direct affront, knowing that He is not pleased with these, but desires another thing, to thrust that upon Him which He cares not for, and refuse Him what He calls for? That single humble heart-worship, and walking with Him, that purity of spirit and conscience which only He prizes, no outward services being acceptable, but as they tend to this end, and do attain it. . . . Oh! saith the carnal mind, anything but this thou shalt have. As many washings and offerings as thou wilt,—*thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil*; yea, rather than fail, *let the fruit of my body go for the sin of my soul* (Micah. vi. 6).

That conscience alone is good, which is much busied in this work, in demanding and answering, which speaks much with itself, and much with God. This is both.

the sign that it is good, and the means to make it better. That soul will doubtless be very wary in its walk, which takes daily account of itself, and renders up that account unto God. It will not live by guess, but naturally examine each step beforehand, because it is resolved to examine all after; will consider well what it should do, because it means to ask over again what it hath done, and not only to answer itself, but to make a faithful report of all unto God, to lay all before Him,—to tell Him what is in any measure well done as his own work, and to bless Him for that; and tell Him, too, all the slips and miscarriages of the day, as our own; complaining of ourselves in his presence, and still entreating free pardon and more wisdom, to walk more holy and exactly, and gaining even by our failings, more humility and more watchfulness.

If you would have your consciences answer well, they must enquire and question much beforehand, Whether is

this I propose and go about is agreeable to my Lord's will? Will it please Him? Ask that more, and regard that more, than this which the most follow: Will it please or profit myself? Fits that my own humour? And examine not only the bulk and substance of thy ways and actions, but the manner of them,—how thy heart is set. So think it not enough to go to church and to pray, but take heed how ye hear; consider how pure He is, and how piercing his eye, whom thou servest.

And truly it should be considered what makes the good conscience, which can make an acceptable answer to God. That appears by the apposition,—*not the putting away of the filth of the flesh*; then it is the putting away of *soul-filthiness*, so it is the renewing and purifying of the conscience that makes it good, pure, and peaceable—*the answer of a good conscience towards God*. The conscience of man is never rightly at peace in itself, until it is

rightly persuaded of peace with God. *What communion between light and darkness* (2 Cor. vi. 14)? So then the conscience must be cleansed, ere it can look upon God, with assurance and peace.

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” (1 Pet. iv. 1).

The main of a Christian's duty lies in these two things, patience in suffering, and avoidance of sin, *ανεχου και εκιχου* and they have a natural influence each upon the other. Although affliction simply doth not, yet affliction sweetly and humbly carried doth purify and disengage the heart from sin, wean it from the world and the common ways of it. And again, holy and exact walking keeps the soul in a sound healthful temper, and so enables it to patient suffering, to bear things more

easily ; as a strong body endures fatigue, heat, cold and hardship with ease, a small part whereof would surcharge a sickly constitution. The consciousness of sin and careless unholy courses do wonderfully weaken a soul, and distemper it, so that it is not able to endure much ; every little thing disturbs it. Therefore the apostle hath reason, both to insist so much on these two points in this epistle, and likewise to interweave the one so often with the other, pressing jointly throughout the *cheerful* bearing of all kinds of afflictions and the careful forbearing all kinds of sin.

. . . . The chief study of a Christian, and the very thing that makes him to be a Christian, is conformity with Christ. *Summa religionis imitari quem colis.* "This is the sum of religion," said that wise heathen Pythagoras, "to be like him whom thou worshippest." But this example, being in itself too sublime, is brought down to our view in Christ, the brightness of God is veiled, and veiled in

our own flesh, that we may be able to look on it. The inaccessible light of the Deity is so attempered in the humanity of Christ, that we may read our lesson by it in Him, and may direct our walk by it.

The engagement lies in this, that He suffered for us. Of this we have treated before. Only in reference to this : had he come down—as some have mis-imagined it—only to set us this perfect way of obedience, and give us an example of it in our own nature, this had been very much, that the Son of God should descend to teach wretched man ; and the great King descend into man, and dwell in a tabernacle of clay, to set up a school in it, for such ignorant accursed creatures, and should, in his own person, act the hardest lesson, both in doing and suffering, to lead us in both. But the matter goes yet higher than this. Oh how much higher hath He suffered, not only as our rule, but as our *surety*, and in *our stead*—“ *He*

suffered for us in the flesh." We are the more obliged to make his suffering our example, because it was to us more than our example,—it was our ransom.

"That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Peter iv. 2).

The chains of sin are so strong, and so fastened on our nature, that there is in us no power to break them off, till a mightier and stronger Spirit than our own come into us. The Spirit of Christ dropped into the soul, makes it able to *break through a troop and leap over a wall*, as David speaks of himself when furnished with the strength of his God (Psalm xviii. 29). Men's resolutions fall to nothing; and as a prisoner who attempts to escape, and does not, is bound faster; thus usually it is with men in their self-purposes of forsaking sin,—they leave out Christ in the work, and so remain in their

captivity; yea, it grows upon them. And while we press them to free themselves, and shew not Christ to them, we put them upon an impossibility. But a look to Him makes it feasible and easy. Faith in Him, and that love which faith begets, break through and surmount all difficulties.

It is the powerful love of Christ that kills the love of sin, and kindles the love of holiness in the soul It makes it a willing sharer in his death, and so a happy partaker of his life.

He that is one with Christ, by believing, is one with Him throughout, in death and in life. As Christ rose from the dead, so he that is dead to sin with Him, through the power of his death, rises to that new life with Him, through the power of his resurrection.

And these two constitute our sanctification, which whosoever do partake of Christ, and are found in Him, do certainly draw from Him. Thus are they joined

same tenor and substance, and the same ends. So Solomon speaks of the heavens and earth, that they remain the same while "*one generation passes and another cometh.*" The Gospel surpasses both in its stability, as our Saviour testifies: they shall *pass away, but not one jot* of this word (Matt. v. 18). The Gospel is from one age to another, of most unalterable integrity, hath still the same vigour and influence as at the first.

They who formerly received the Gospel, received it on these terms, *therefore think it not hard.* And they are now *dead*; all the difficulty of that work of dying to sin is now over with them. If they had not died to their sins by the Gospel, they had after a while died in them, and so died eternally. If we will not part with sin, if we die in it and with it, we and our sin perish together; but if it die first before us, then we live for ever. . . . Do they that are dead who heard and obeyed the Gospel, now repent of their

repentance and mortifying of the flesh ? Or, rather, do they not think ten thousand times more pains, were it for ages, all too little for one moment of that which now they enjoy, and shall enjoy to all eternity ? And they that are dead, who heard the Gospel and slighted it—what would they give, if such a thing might be, for one of those opportunities which now we daily have, and daily lose ?

Think therefore of these things. That visage of death that is so terrible to unchanged sinners, shall be amiable to thine eye having found a life in the Gospel, as happy, and lasting as this is miserable and vanishing ; and seeing the perfection of that life on the other side of death, thou wilt long for the passage.

It may be at some times, in a spiritual distemper, holy exercises and ordinances will not do that present sensible sweetness to a Christian that he desires ; and some will for a long time be under dryness and deadness that way : yet there is

here an evidence of this spiritual life, that thou stayest by thy Lord, and reliest on Him, and wilt not leave these means, how sapless soever to thy sense, for the present. Thou findest for a long time little sweetness in prayer, yet thou prayest still; and when thou canst say nothing, yet offerest at it, and lookest towards Christ, thy life. Thou dost not turn away from these things to seek consolation elsewhere; but, as thou knowest that life is in Christ, thou wilt stay till He refresh thee with new and lively influence. As St. Peter says—*Lord whither should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life* (John vi. 68).

The soul is more spiritually affected with its own condition, by laying it open before the Lord; becomes more deeply sensible of sin, and ashamed in his sight, in confessing it before Him, more dilated and enlarged to receive the mercies sued for. “*Watch and pray,*” says our Saviour, and St. Paul—“*Pray continually.*” He that is rich in prayer shall grow much in

grace. He shall thrive and increase most who is busiest in this. It is our very traffic with Heaven, and fetches the most precious commodities thence. He who sends oftenest out these ships of desire,—who makes the most voyages to that land of spices and pearls, shall be sure to improve his stock most, and have most of Heaven upon earth.

But our great suit is to be for the *spirit* of prayer, that we may speak the language of the Sons of God by the Spirit of God. . . . Only the children in that right strain that takes Him, call God their *Father*, and cry unto Him as their Father ; and, therefore, many a poor unlettered Christian far outstrips your school-rabbies in this faculty, because it is not effectually taught in these lower academies. They must be in God's own school, children of his house, who speak this language.

But for advancing in this, and growing more skilful in it, prayer is with continual dependence on the Spirit to be much used.

By praying thou shalt learn to pray.
Thou shalt both obtain more of the Spirit,
and find more of the cheerful working of
it in prayer.

The fashion of this world passeth away.

Oh foolish man that hunteth such poor things, and wilt not be called off till death benight him, and he finds his great work not done,—yea, not begun, nor even seriously thought of. Your buildings, your trading, your lands, your matches and friendships and projects, when they take with you, and your hearts are after them, say—“But for how long are all these?” Their end is at hand, *therefore be sober, and watch unto prayer.* Learn to divide better; more hours for prayer, and fewer for them.

It is reported of one, that hearing the fifth chapter of Genesis read, such long lives, and yet the burden still *they died.* Seth lived 912 years, *and he died*; Enos lived 905 years, *and he died*; Methuselah,

969, *and he died*; he took so deeply the thoughts of death and eternity, that it changed his whole frame, and turned him from a voluptuous to a most strict and pious course of life.

How small a word will do much when God sets it into the heart!

“And, above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves” (1 Pet. iv. 8).

There is amongst all the graces of the Spirit, none more comprehensive than that of *love*, in so much that St. Paul calls it—*the fulfilling of the law* (Rom. xiii. 10).

Love to God is that which makes us live to Him, and be wholly his. That which most powerfully weans us from this world, and causeth us delight in communion with Him, in holy meditation and prayer. . . .

As the devil's work is division, Christ's work is union.

Now the love of our brethren is not

another from the love of God, it is but the streaming forth of it, or the reflection of it. . . . God allows,—yea, commands,—yea, *causes*, that it stream forth, and set itself toward them, remaining still in Him, as in its source and centre ; beginning at Him and returning to Him, as the beams that diffuse themselves from the sun, yet are not divided or cut off from it, but remain in it, and, by emanation, issue from it ; so in loving our brethren after a spiritual Christian manner, we do, even in that, love our God.

This is that bitter root of all enmity in man against God, and amongst men against one another—*Self*-man's heart turned from God towards himself ; and the very work of renewing grace, is to annul and destroy self, to replace God in his sight, that the heart and all its affections and motions may be at his disposal ; so that instead of self-will and self-love, which ruled before, now, the will of God and the love of God command all.

And where it is thus, there this *φιλανδελφία*, this love of our brethren will be sincere. Whence is it that wars and contests, and mutual disgracings and despisings do so much abound, but that men love themselves, and nothing but themselves, or in relation to themselves, as it pleases, and is advantageous to them? This is the standard and rule. All is carried by interest ; so thence are strifes and defamings, and bitterness against one another ; but the Spirit of Christ coming in, undoes all selfishness. And now, what is according to God, what He wills and loves, that is law, and a powerful law is this law of love ; so written on the heart that it obeys with delight, and knows no constraint but the sweet constraint of love. To forgive a wrong, to love even thine enemy for Him, is not only feasible now, but delectable ; although a little while ago thou thoughtest it was quite impossible.

That Spirit of Christ, which is all sweet-

ness and love, so calms and composes the heart, that peace with God, and that unspeakably blessed correspondence of love with Him, do so fill the soul with lovingness and sweetness, that it can breathe nothing else. It hates nothing but sin, it pities the sinner, and carries towards the worst, that love of goodwill, desiring their return and salvation. . . . No natural advantages of birth, of beauty, or of wit, draw a Christian's love so much as the resemblance of Christ; whenever that is found, it is comely and lovely, to a soul that loves Him.

Much communion with God, sweetens and calms the mind, cures the distempers of passion and pride which are the avowed enemies of love.

1st. Prayer disposes to this love, "*He that loveth not, knoweth not God,*" saith the beloved apostle, "*for God is love,*" (1 John iv. 8). He that is most conversant with love, in the spring of it, where it is purest and fullest, cannot but have the fullest measure

of it. If they who use the society of mild and good men are insensibly assimilated to them, grow like them, and contract somewhat of their temper, much more doth familiar walking with God, powerfully transform the soul into his likeness, making it merciful and loving, and ready to forgive, as He is.

2nd. This love disposes to prayer. To pray together, hearts must be consorted and tuned together, otherwise, how can they sound the same suits harmoniously. How unpleasant in the exquisite ear of God, who made the ear, are the jarring disunited hearts that often seem to join in the same prayer, and yet are not set together in love! And when thou prayest alone, while thy heart is embittered and disaffected to thy brother, although upon an offence done to thee, it is as a mistuned instrument, the strings are not accorded, are not in tune amongst themselves, and so the sound is harsh and offensive. When thou art stirred and in pass

against thy brother, or not lovingly affected towards him, what broken, disordered, unfastened stuff are thy requests ! Therefore the Lord will have this done first the heart tuned ; “ *Go thy way,*” says he, “ *leave thy gift, and be reconciled to thy brother, then come and offer thy gift*” (Matt. v. 23). Why is this, which is so much recommended by Christ, so little regarded by Christians ? It is given by Him, as the characteristic and badge of his followers ; yet, of those who profess to be so, how few wear it. . . . Oh a little real Christianity were more worth than all that empty profession and discourse that we think so much of ! When the heart entertains either bitter malice, or but uncharitable prejudices, there will be a certain decay of spirituality in the whole soul. What do they think who are still picking at every appearing of infirmity in their brethren ? Know they not that the frailties which cleave to the saints of God, while they are here, do stand in

need of, and call for, this mutual office of love, to cover and pass them by? Who is there that stands not in need of this? There can be no society or entertaining of Christian converse without it; giving allowance; reckoning to meet with defects and weaknesses on all hands, and covering the failings of one another, seeing it is mutually needful.

But this bars not the judicial trial of scandalous offences, nor the giving information of them, and bringing them under due censure. The forbearing of this is *not* charity, but both iniquity and cruelty, and this cleaves too much to many of us. They that cannot pass over the least touch of a wrong done to themselves, can digest twenty high injuries done to God by profane persons about them, and resent it not. Such may be assured they are as yet destitute of love to God, and of Christian love to their brethren which springs from it.

Every man hath received some gift; n

man all gifts ; and this rightly considered would keep all in a more even temper. As in nature nothing is altogether useless, so nothing is self-sufficient. . . . Thou that carriest it so high lovest much by it. Many poor Christians may have that in them, which would be very useful to thee, but thou overlookest it and treadest on it. Paul acknowledgeth that *he was comforted by the coming of Titus*, though far inferior to him. Sometimes a very mean, unlettered Christian, may speak more profitably and comfortably, even to a knowing, learned man, than multitudes of his own best thoughts could do, especially in a time of weakness, and darkness.

He that would faithfully teach of God must be *taught of God*, Θεο δίδακτος, *God-learned* ; and this will help in all the rest ; will help him to be faithful in delivering the message as he receives it, not detracting, nor adding, nor altering. And this, truly, is a chief thing for ministers, and

for individual Christians, still to depend on the influence and strength of God; to do all his works in that strength.

Faith's great work is to renounce self-power, and to bring in the power of God to be ours. Happy they that are weakest in themselves, sensibly so. That word of the Apostle is theirs; they know what it means, though a riddle to the world: "*When I am weak, then am I strong,*" (2 Cor. xii. 10).

This is the great task, to have self under our feet, and God only in our eye, and purpose in all.

"But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."

This is indeed our joy, that we have so light a burden; so sweet an exchange; the weight of sin quite taken off our backs; and all bound on his cross only, and our crosses, the badge of our conformity to Him, laid indeed on our shoulders, but

the great weight of them likewise held up by his hand, that they overpress us not.

These fires of our trial may be corrective and purgative of the remaining power of sin, and they are so intended ; but Jesus Christ alone, in the sufferings of his own cross, was the burnt-offering, *the propitiation for our sins*.

Now although He hath perfectly satisfied for us and saved us by his sufferings, yet this conformity to Him, in the way of suffering, is most reasonable.

Although our holiness doth not stand in point of law, nor come in at all in the matter of justifying us, yet we are called and appointed, to holiness in Christ, as assimilating us to Him, our glorious Head; and we do really receive it from Him, that we may be like Him. So these, our sufferings, bear a very congruous likeness to Him, though no way as an accession to his in expiation, yet as a part of his image, and therefore the Apostle says, even in this respect, that *we are predestinated to be*

conformed to the image of his Son, (Rom. viii. 29). Is it fit that we should not follow where our Captain led, and went first, but that He should lead through rugged thorny ways, and we pass about to get away through flowery meadows? As his natural body shared with his head in his sufferings; so ought his body mystical to share with Him as its head. If we be parts of Him, can we think that a body finding nothing but ease, and bathing in delights, can agree to a head so tormented? I remember what that pious duke said at Jerusalem when they offered to make him king there: "*Nolo aureum, ubi Christus spineum*"—no crown of gold where Christ was crowned with thorns.

This is the way we must follow, or else resolve to leave Him; the way of the Cross is the royal way to the Crown.

Yet the children of God are not called to so sad a life as the world imagines; besides what is laid up for them in heaven, they have, even here, their rejoicings and

songs in their distresses. . . . True, there may be a darkness within, clouding all the matter of their joy, but even that darkness is the seed-time of after-joy; light is sown in that darkness, and shall spring up; and not only shall they have a rich crop at full harvest, but even some first-fruits of it here in pledge of the harvest

The following of Christ makes any way pleasant. His faithful followers refuse no march after Him, be it through deserts and mountains, and storms and hazards, that will affright self-pleasing, easy spirits. Hearts kindled and actuated with the Spirit of Christ *will follow Him whithersoever He goeth.*

“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed,” &c.

Shun the appearance of evil. Walk warily and prudently in all things. Be not *heady* nor *self-willed*; no, not in the

best things. Walk not upon the utter brink and edge of your liberty, for then you shall be in danger of overpassing it. Things that are lawful may be inexpedient, and, in case there is fear of scandal, ought either to be wholly forborne, or used with much prudence and circumspection. Oh ! study in all things, to adorn the Gospel, and under a sense of your own unskilfulness and folly, beg wisdom from above, that anointing which will teach you all things, much of that Holy Spirit that will lead you in the way of all truth ; and then, in that way, whatsoever may befall you, suffer it, and however you may be vilified and reproached, happy are ye ; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.

Thus, solid indeed, is the happiness of the saints, that in the lowest condition it remains the same ; in disgraces, in caves, in prisons and chains,—cast them where you will, still they are happy. A diamond in the mire, sullied and trampled on, yet still retains its own worth.

The less the Christian finds esteem and acceptance in the world, the more he turns his eye inward, to see what is there, and there he finds the world's contempt counterpoised, by a weight of excellency and glory, even in this present condition, as a pledge of the glory before him.

It is the sum of Christianity to have thy will crucified, and the will of the Lord thy only desire. Whether joy or sorrow, sickness or health, life or death, in all, in all *Thy will be done.*

“What shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel?”

The end of all the ungodly is terrible, but especially the end of such as have the Gospel, and have not *received* and *obeyed* it.

The word ἀπειθοντων hath in it both unbelief and disobedience; and they are inseparable. Unbelief is the grand point of disobedience in itself, and the spring of

all other disobedience; and the pity is, that men will not believe it to be thus.

They think it an easy and a common thing to believe. Who doth not believe? Oh, but rather, who does? *Who hath believed our report?*

Were our own misery, and the happiness that is in Christ, believed, were the riches of Christ and the love of Christ believed, would not this persuade men to forsake their sins and the world, in order to embrace Him?

But men run away with an idle fancy of believing, and do not deeply consider what news the Gospel brings, and how much it concerns them. Sometimes, it may be, they have a sudden thought of it, and they think,—I will think on it better at some other time. But when comes that time? One business rushes in after another, and shuffles it out. Men are not at leisure to be saved.

"A witness of the sufferings of Christ,"
(1 Peter v. 1).

Men commonly read and hear, and may possibly preach, of the sufferings of Christ, as a common story, and in that way it may a little move a man, and wring tears from his eyes. But faith hath another kind of sight of them, and so works another kind of affection; and without that, the very eyesight of them had availed the Apostles nothing. But our slender view of these things occasions a light sense of them, and that cold incitement to answerable duty. Certainly, deep impressions would cause lively expressions.

"And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter iv. 18).

It is true, then, that they are *scarcely saved*, even they who try to walk up-

rightly in the ways of God. . . .
This imports, not any uncertainty, or hazard, in the thing itself, as to the end, in respect of the purpose and performance of God, but only the great difficulties and hard encounters in the way, that they go through, so many temptations and tribulations, *so many fightings without and fears within.*

The Christian is sometimes so simple and weak, and his enemies are so crafty and powerful, and, worst of all, the strength of his own corruptions. These clog and trouble him worst, and he cannot shake them off and prevail against them, without much pain, many prayers and tears, and many times after much wrestling he scarcely finds he has gained any ground. . . . When he would mount up, he finds himself as a bird with a stone tied to its foot; he hath wings that flutter to be upwards, but is pressed down with the weight fastened to him. What struggling with wanderings, and deadn

in hearing, and reading and prayer. And what is most grievous, is, that by their unwary walking, and the prevailing of some corruption, they grieve the Spirit of God, and provoke Him to hide his face, and withdraw his comforts. How much pain to attain anything, any particular grace, of meekness, or humility, or self-denial; and if anything be attained, how often are they driven back. If they do but cease from striving a little, they are driven back by the stream.

And what returns of doubting and misbelief, after they thought they were got somewhat above them, insomuch that, sometimes, they are at the point of giving over, and thinking it will never be for them. And yet, through all, they are brought safe home. There is another strength than their's, which bears them up and brings them through.

“Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator,” (1 Pet. iv. 19).

Nothing doth so establish the mind, amidst the rolling and turbulency of earthly things, as both a look above them and a look beyond them, to the sweet and beautiful end to which, by that Hand, they shall be brought. This the apostle here lays as the foundation of that patience with which in troubles he would have his brethren to be furnished. And thus he closes the chapter—*“Wherefore let them that suffer,”* &c.

If men would have inward peace, amidst outward troubles, they must walk by the rule of peace, and keep strictly to it. If you would commit your soul to the keeping of God, know that He is a holy God.

Therefore, as you would have this confidence, to give your holy God the kee

ing of your soul, and that He may accept of it, and take it off your hand, beware of wilful pollutions, and unholy ways.

Dost thou desire to dwell in Him, and walk with Him? Then, whatsoever be thy guiltiness and unworthiness, come forward, and give him thy soul to keep. Loose ways will loosen your hold of him, and confidence in him. He will never be a guardian and patron of wickedness. No; He is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with him. (Psal. v. 4).

If thou give thy soul to Him to keep, on terms of liberty to sin, He will turn it out of his doors.

You that would have safety with God in evil times, beware of evil ways; for in these it cannot be.

But wouldst thou have thy soul delivered from sin, rather than from trouble; yea, rather than from hell? Is that the chief safety thou seekest, to be kept from iniquity, from thine own iniquity, thy

beloved sin? Dost thou desire to dwell in Him and walk with Him? Then, whatsoever be thy guiltiness and unworthiness, come forward and give Him thy soul to keep.

“The Elders which are amongst you.”

Elders here, as in other places, is a name, not of age, but of office; yet the office is named by that age which is, or ought to be, most suitably qualified for it, importing, that men, though not aged, yet, if called to that office, should be noted for such wisdom, and gravity of mind and carriage, as may give that authority and command, which is requisite for persons in their calling, as young Timothy was in humility and diligence, as the apostle testifies of him (Phil. ii. 20), and as he further exhorts him to be (1 Tim. iv. 12): *“Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of holiness in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity.”*

The name of *ruling elders* sometimes denotes civil rulers, sometimes pastors of the church ; as amongst the Jews both offices often met in the same person.

Sometimes pastors are meant, as the exhortation of *feeding the flock* evidences. And then the title given to Christ, in the encouragement which is added, confirms this interpretation, *The chief Shepherd*.

Not to say any more of the usual resemblance of a flock, as importing the weakness and tenderness of the church, the continued need she stands in, of inspection and guidance and defence, and the tender care of the Chief Shepherd for these things ; the phrase enforces the present duty of subordinate pastors, their care and diligence in feeding the flock.

This is the thing we have to eye and study, to set Christ before us, and to apply ourselves, in his strength, to this work : not to seek to *please*, but to *feed* ; not to delight the ears, but to feed *the souls*, of his people.

And as to you who listen, though you heard many sermons every day, and attained further light by them, and carried a plausible profession of religion, yet, unless, by the Gospel, you be transformed into the likeness of Christ, and grace be indeed growing in you, you are but, as one says of the cypress tree, "tall and fair, but fruitless."

Love is the great endowment of a shepherd of Christ's flock. He says not to Peter, Art thou wise or learned and eloquent? but *Lovest thou me?* Then *feed my sheep.*

The Spirit of Christ in his ministers is the thing that makes them truly *elders*, and *worthy of double honour*; and without that, men may hunt after respect and credit by other parts; and the more they follow it, the faster it flies from them; or if they catch anything of it, they only grasp a shadow.

"All of you be subject, one to another, and be clothed with humility," (1 Peter v. 5).

Now to work the heart into an humble posture, look *into thyself* in earnest, and truly, whatsoever thou be that hast the highest conceit of thyself, and the highest cause for it, a real sight of thyself will lay thy crest. Men look on any good, or any fancy of it, in themselves, with both eyes, and skip over, as unpleasant, their real defects and deformities. Every man is, naturally, his own flatterer, otherwise flatteries and false crying up, from others, would make little impression ; but hence, their success,—they meet with the same conceit within.

Look on the good in others, and the evil in thyself; make that the parallel, and then thou wilt walk humbly. Most men do just the contrary, and that foolish and unjust comparison puffs them up.

Pray much for the spirit of humility, the Spirit of Christ, for that it is ; other-

wise all thy vileness will not humble thee.

And above all, it is needful to watch ourselves, in our best things, that sin get not in, or if it break in, or steal in, at any time, that it be presently found out, and cast out again ; to have that established within us, to do all for God,—to intend Him and his glory in all, and to be willing to advance his glory, were it by our own disgrace ; not to make pleasing or raising the rule of exercising thy parts and graces when thou art called to use and bring them forth, but the good of thy brethren, and, in that, the glory of thy Lord.

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,” (1 Peter v. 6).

This is the end why God humbles you. He lays weights upon you that you may be depressed. Now when this end is gained that you are willingly so, then the weights

are taken off, and you are lifted up by his gracious hand ; otherwise it is not enough that He hath humbled you by his hand, unless you *humble yourselves* under his hand.

Many have had great and sore pressures, one affliction after another, and been humbled, and yet not made humble,—humbled by force, in regard of their outward condition, but not humbled in their inward temper ; and, therefore, as soon as the weight is off, like heaps of wool, they rise up again, and grow as big as before.

The gracious design of our God is to make much room for grace by much humbling, especially in some spirits which need much trying, or when He means to enable for some singular service. And thus the time is not lost, as we are apt to imagine. It is necessary time and pains that are given to the unballasting of a ship,—the casting out of the earth and sand, when it is to be laden with spices.

We must be emptied more if we would

have more of that fulness and riches which we are longing for. So long as we fume and chafe against his way, though it be in our best supplications, we are not in a posture for a favourable answer. . . . This I would recommend in any estate, the humble falling under the Lord's hand, kissing the rod, and falling low before Him; and this is the way to be raised. . . . Wouldst thou have it right, it must be without condition, without reserve; no time, nor anything prescribed, and then He will make his word good. *He will raise thee up*, and that *in due time*—not thy fancied time, but his own wisely appointed time. Thou thinkest—I am sinking—if He help not now it will be too late; yet He sees it otherwise. He can let thee sink still lower, and yet bring thee up again. He doth but stay till the most fit time. Thou canst not see it now, but thou shalt see it—that his chosen time is absolutely best. “*He waiteth to be gracious*” (Isa. xxx. 18).

“ Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.”

Every one hath some desires and purposes, that are predominant with him, besides those that relate to the daily exigencies of life, with which he is compassed, and in both, according to their importance, and his estimate of them, and the difficulties occurring in them, he is, naturally, carried to be thoughtful and careful in them. Now the excess and distemper of this care is one of the great diseases and miseries of man's life. Moral men, perceiving and feeling it, have been tampering at the cure, but with little success.

Some are indeed forced to labour hard for their daily bread ; but, undoubtedly, a great deal of the sweat and toil of the greatest part of men is about unnecessaries. Such an estate—so much honour and esteem and rank in the world—these are the things that make some men slaves to the humours of others whom they court,

and those possibly to whom they are so enthralled are themselves at as little liberty, captivated to the humours of some above them, or to some, who, being below them, can give furtherance to their ends of enrichment, advancement and popularity. *They that will be rich*, says the Apostle (1 Tim. vi. 9), *who are resolved upon it at any terms, meet with terms hard enough ; they fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. Drown* them, there is no recovering ; but still they are plunged deeper and deeper. *Foolish lusts* ; unreasonable, childish desires ; after one bargain such another ; and after one sin, another to make even ; and somewhat then to keep that whole, and so on without end. If their hearts are set upon purchase and land, still some house or neighbour-field, some Naboth's vineyard, is in their eyes, and all the rest is nothing without it.

But this is the first thing indeed to be

looked to,—that our desires and cares be brought to a due compass. And what would we have? Think we that contentment lies in so much and no less! When that is attained, it shall appear as far off as before. When children are at the foot of a high hill, they think it reaches the heavens; and yet, if they were there, they would find themselves as far off as before, or at least, not sensibly nearer. Men think, Oh, had I this, I were well; and when it is reached, it is but an advanced standing from which to look higher, and spy out for some other thing. We are indeed children in this,—to think that the good of an estate lies in the greatness, and not in the fitness of it for us. . . . Great estates and places have often great grief and cares attending them, as shadows are proportioned to their bodies. All vain, needless cares, are to be discharged, and, as being unfit to cast on thy God, are to be quite cast out of thy heart. . . . Entertain no care at all, but such as thou mayst

put into God's hands ; such as He will take off thy head, and undertake for thee. All needful, lawful care, and that only, will He receive. Seek a well-regulated, sober spirit. In the things of this life *be content with food and raiment* : not delicacies but *food* ; not ornament, but *raiment*. This course our Saviour would have thee take (Matt. vi. 31) : first to cut off superfluous care, and then to turn over on thy God what is necessary. Only this is required of thee,—to refer the matter to His discretion entirely.

We offer our service ; but for skill and strength to discharge it, that care we lay on Him, and he allows us to do so ; and then for the event and success, with that we trust Him entirely. And this is the way to walk cheerfully and contentedly homewards, leaning and resting, all the way, upon Him, who is both our *guide* and our *strength*. But some may say, What is the way of devolving my burden ? The way is doubtless by praying and believing,

these are the hands, by which the soul can turn over to God what itself cannot bear. *Be careful for nothing* (Phil. iv. 6). A great word ! Oh, but how shall it be ? Why thus, says he, *In all things make your requests known unto God*, and, in a confident cheerful way, *supplication* mixed with *thanksgiving*.

Then, as for thy spiritual estate, lay over upon God the care of that too. Be not so much in thorny questionings, doubting and disputing at every step : Oh ! is this accepted, and that accepted ? and so much deadness, &c.; but apply thyself more simply to thy duty. Lamely as it may be, halt on, and believe that He is gracious, and pities thee, and lay the care of bringing thee through upon Him. Lie not complaining and arguing, but *up and be doing*, and the Lord shall be with thee (1 Chron. xxii. 16). I am persuaded that many a soul that hath some truth of grace, falls much behind in the progress, by this accustomed way of endless ques-

tionings. Men can scarcely be brought to examine and suspect their own condition, being carnally secure, and satisfied that all is well; but when once they awaken and set to this they are ready to entangle themselves in it, and neglect their way by poring on their condition. They will not set cheerfully to anything, because they want assurances and height of joy, and this course they take is the way to want it still. Walking humbly and sincerely, and offering at thy duty, and waiting on the Lord, is certainly the better way and nearer that very purpose of thine; for *He meeteth him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness; those that remember Him in his ways* (Isa. lxiv. 5).

“*Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Pet. v. 8).

The children of God, if they rightly

take their Father's mind, are always disburdened of perplexing carefulness, but never exempted from diligent watchfulness. Thus we find here they are enjoined to cast all their care upon a loving Father, and are secured by his care. He takes it well that they lay all over on Him; yea, He takes it not well when they forbear Him, and burden themselves. He hath provided a sweet quiet life for them, could they improve and use it; a calm and firm condition, in all the troubles and storms that are about them; however things go, to find content, and *be careful for nothing.*

Now, upon this, a carnal heart would imagine straight according to its sense and inclination,—as it desires to have it, so would it dream that it is,—that then a man devolving his care on God may give up all watch and ward, and need not apply himself to any kind of duty. But this is the ignorant and perverse mistake. the reasonless reasoning of the flesh. You

see they are here joined, not only as agreeable, but indeed as inseparable, *Cast all your care on Him, for He careth for you ; and withal, Be sober, be vigilant.*

And this is the Scripture logic. "*It is He that worketh in you both to will and to do*" (Phil. ii. 13). Then would you possibly think,—I need not work at all ; or, if I do, it may be very easily and securely. No. *Therefore, says the Apostle, because He worketh in you to will and to do, work out your own salvation ; yea, and do it with fear and trembling ; work you in humble obedience to his commands, and in dependence on Him who worketh all in you.*

Thus here, *cast your care on Him* : not that you may be the more free to take your own pleasure and slothful ease ; but, on the contrary, that you may be the more active, and apt to watch ; being freed from the burden of vexing carefulness, which would press and encumber you. That slothful reliance of most souls on

blind thoughts of mercy will undo them ; their faith is *a dead faith*, and a deadly faith ; they are perishing, and will not know it. Such souls do not duly cast their care on God ; for indeed they have no care. There is no *right* diligence without believing.

But quiet stayedness of heart on God, dependence on Him, on his strength for *performance*, and his free love in Christ for *acceptance*, this makes the work go kindly and sweetly on, makes it pleasing to God, and refreshing to thy soul. The more thou observest thine own miscarriages towards God, the less severely will He observe them.

Be sober. This sobriety is not only temperance in meat and drink, but in all things that concern the flesh,—even that of diet is, though not all, a very considerable part of it,—and this hath implied in it not only that we exceed not in quality and quantity, but also that we are not to make careful and studious provi-

sion, nor to take up our thoughts how to please our palate ; so, even in the use of sober mean diet, we eat not merely to please ourselves, but even to propound this to ourselves in our sitting down to it, to use these helps to life, and the life itself, in obedience to the great Giver, and in endeavouring to promote his glory.

Each of us hath some trifle, or earthly vanity—some choice one from which he cannot easily be taken off. We have childish hearts, cleaving to vanity. Therefore these two are here and ordinarily joined. *Be sober and watchful.*

If, then, you would have free spirits for spiritual things, keep them at a spare diet in all things temporal. Let not out your hearts to anything here below. Learn to delight in God.

Oh, my beloved, did we know our continual danger, it would shake us out of this miserable dead security that possesses us. We perhaps think not on it, but there are snares laid for us all the way

in every path we walk in, and every step of it; in our meat and drink, in our calling and labour, in our house at home, in our journeying abroad; yea, even in God's house, and in our spiritual exercises, both there and in private.

Satan is justly called our *adversary*, the enemy of holiness, and of our souls; first tempting to sin, and then accusing for sin, as his name here imparts; appearing against us upon the advantages he hath gained. He studies our nature and fits his temptations to it, knows the prevalency of lust and earthliness, and that great and most general evil of pride, so like himself, and that is his throne in the heart. Sometimes he *boweth down*, as is said of the lion, (Psalm x. 9), he waits his opportunity craftily, and then assaults fiercely. And the children of God find sometimes so much violence in his temptations, that they surprise them, such horrid thoughts cast in as poisoned arrows and *fiery darts*, as the Apostle speaks (Eph. vi. 16). And

this his enmity, though it is against man in general, yet is most enraged against the children of God. He goes about, and spies where they are weakest; and accordingly directs his attacks most against those who are most advanced in holiness, and nearest to God. They were once under his power, and now being escaped from him, he pursues them, as Pharoah did the Israelites, with all his forces, raging and roaring after them, as a prey that was once in his den and under his paw, and now is rescued.

Is it not most reasonable hence to press watchfulness, to keep continual watch; to try what is under every offer of the world, every motion of our own natural hearts. Especially after a time of some special seasons of grace, and some special new supplies of grace, received in such seasons, then will he set on most angrily, when he knows of the richest booty. The pirates that let the ships pass as they go by empty, watch them well when they

return richly laden ; so doth this great pirate. Did he not assault our Saviour straight after his baptism ? And that we may *watch* it concerns us to be *sober*. The instruction is military : a drunken soldier is not fit to be on the watch. This, most of us are, with our several fancies and vanities. And when we have gained some advantage in a conflict, or when the enemy seems to retire and be gone ; yet, even then, are we to be watchful, yea, especially watchful. How many, presuming on false safeties, sitting down to carouse, or lying down to sleep, have been re-assaulted and cut off ! *Invadunt urbem somno vinoque sepultam*. Oh, beware when you think yourselves most safe ! That very thought makes you least safe. Take our Saviour's own words : "*Take heed lest at any time your hearts be surcharged with surfeittings and drunkenness and the cares of this life*" (Luke xxi. 34).

Oh mind your work and your warfare
"Always more than your ease and pleasure !

Seek it not here. Oh, poor short rest if it were! But follow the Lord Jesus through conflicts and sufferings. A little while, and you shall have certain victory, and after it everlasting triumph. In this persuasion, you should be abstinent and watchful, and *endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ*, as the apostle speaks (2 Tim. xi. 4), "*not entangling yourselves with the affairs of this life.*"

Stand watching, and if you be assaulted *resist*.

"Stedfast in the faith."

This is absolutely necessary for resistance. A man cannot fight upon a quagmire; there is no standing out without some firm ground to tread upon; and this faith alone furnishes. He says not, *stedfast* by your own resolutions and purposes, but *stedfast by faith*. The power of God, by faith, becomes ours; for that is contained and engaged in the

word of promise. *And this is our victory*, says the apostle John, whereby we overcome the world, *even our faith*, (1 John v. 4). So faith is our victory whereby we overcome the prince of this world. *Whom resist stedfast in the faith*. Faith sets the Lion of the tribe of Judah against this *roaring lion* of the bottomless pit; that delivering lion against this devouring lion.

When the soul is surrounded with enemies on all hands, so that there seems no way of escape, Faith flies above them, and carries up the soul to that refuge in Christ, and is there safe. Draw thou to the standard of Jesus Christ, and the day shall be thine; for victory follows that standard, and cannot be severed from it.

“Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Pet. v. 9).

There is one thing that much troubles the patience, and weakens the faith, of

some Christians ; they are ready to think that there is no one, yea, that there never was any one, beloved of God, in such a condition as theirs. Thus they sometimes swell even their outward trials in imagination, but oftener their inward ones, which are most heavy and pressing to themselves, and the parallel of them in others, least discernible by them. Therefore the apostle Paul breaks this conceit, (1 Cor, x. 13) : “ *No temptation hath taken you but such as is common to men.* And here is the same truth,—*The same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren.* But we had rather hear of ease, and cannot, after all that is said, bring our hearts to comply with this ; that temptations and troubles are the saint’s portion here, and that this is the royal way to the kingdom. Our King led in it, and all his followers go the same way ; the whole brotherhood, *all our brethren*, go in it, and our eldest brother went first.

But the god of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you (Pet. v. 10).

This is often urged on Christians, as their duty, and accordingly ought they to apply themselves to it, and use their highest diligence in it; not to take the beginning of Christianity for the end of it, to think it enough if they are entered into the way of it, and to sit down upon the entry; but to walk on, to *go from strength to strength*, and that even through the greatest difficulties and discouragements, to press forward with unmoved stability and fixedness of mind. They ought to be aiming at perfection. It is true we shall still fall exceedingly short of it; but the more we study it the nearer shall we come to it; the higher we aim, the higher shall we shoot, though we shoot not so high as we aim.

It is an excellent life, and it is the proper life of a Christian, to be daily outstripping himself, to be spiritually wiser, holier, more heavenly-minded to-day than yesterday, and to-morrow, if it be added to his life, than to-day. *Suavissima vita est indies sentire fieri meliorem.* Every day loving the world less and Christ more than on the former, and gaining every day some further victory over his secret corruptions, his desires in temporal things more cool and indifferent, and in spiritual things more ardent; his heart rendered more solid and fixed upon God, aspiring to nearer communion with Him, and labouring that particular graces may be more lively and strong; faith more confirmed and stayed, love more inflamed; composed meekness producing more deep humility.

But all our endeavours and diligence in this will be vain, unless we look for our perfecting and establishing from the *right hand*, without which we can do

nothing. *The God of all grace make you perfect.* This prayer is grounded, (as all prayer of faith must be), on the promise and covenant of God. *He is our Rock, and his work is perfect* (Deut. xxxii. 4). He doth not begin a building and then leave it off; none of his designs break in the middle, or fall short of their end. *He will perfect that good work which he hath begun to the day of Jesus Christ* (Phil. i. 6). Hence is the stability of grace, the perseverance of the saints: it is founded upon his unchangeableness. . . . The believer looks to Jesus (*αφερωντες*) (Heb. xii. 2), *looks off* from all oppositions and difficulties, looks above them to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. The Author, and therefore Finisher. Though thou art weak, He is strong, and it is *He that strengtheneth thee and renews thy strength.* The word here rendered *renew* signifies *change*, they shall have for their own his strength. A weak believer and his strong Saviour will

be too hard for all that can rise against them.

The God of all grace. The work of salvation is all free grace, from beginning to end. And as He is the God of pardoning grace, so withal, the God of sanctifying grace. But most powerfully are the children of God sanctified by the Spirit within them; without which, indeed, no other thing could be of any advantage to them in this. That divine fire kindled within them is daily refining and sublimating them; that Spirit of Christ conquering sin, and by the mighty flame of his love, consuming the earth and dross that is in them; making their affections more spiritual and disengaged from all creature delights. And thus, as they receive the beginning of grace freely, so all the advances of it; life from their Lord still flowing and causing them to grow, abating the power of sin, strengthening a fainting faith, quickening a languishing love, in wonderful ways, advancing the good of

his children, by things not only harsh to them, as afflictions and temptations, but by that which is the very opposite in its nature, sin itself; raising them by their falls, and strengthening them by their very troubles, working them to humility and vigilance, and sending them to Christ for strength, by the experience of their weaknesses and failings. And as He is the God of pardoning grace and of sanctifying grace in the beginning, and growth of it, so also the God of supporting grace, of that supervenient influence, without which, the graces placed within us would lie dead, and fail us in the time of greatest need.

The Apostle Paul calls our God the God of all consolation, as here He is styled *the God of all grace*. And this is our rejoicing, that in his hand is all good, our sanctification and consolation, assistance and assurance, *grace* and *glory*. It is his will that we have constant recourse to Him for all we want. He delights in

our seeking and drawing much from Him, and it is by believing and praying that we do draw from Him. But remember, all this grace that we would receive from the *God of all grace*, must be from *God in Christ*. There it flows for us and thither we are directed. It was the Father's good pleasure that in Him should all fulness dwell (Col. i. 19), and that for us that we might know whither to go and where to apply for it.

Who hath called us unto his eternal glory.

This *calling*, I conceive, doth not simply mean the design of the Gospel in its general publication, wherein the outward call lies, that it holds forth, and sets before us, eternal glory as the general result of grace ; but refers to the real bringing of a Christian to Christ, and uniting him with Christ, and so giving a real and firm title to glory. Such a call, powerfully works grace in the soul, and secures glory to the soul ; gives it a right to that

inheritance, and fits it for it, and sometimes gives it, even the evident and sweet assurance of it. This assurance, indeed, all the heirs of glory have not ordinarily within them, and scarcely any have at all times equally clear. Some travel on, in a covert cloudy day, and get home by it, having so much light as to know their way, and yet do not at all clearly see the bright and full sunshine of assurance; others have it breaking forth at times, and anon under a cloud; and some have it more constantly. But as all meet in the end, so all agree in this at the beginning, that is, in the reality of the thing.

Eternal!—Oh, that adds much. Men would have more reason so to affect and pursue the glory of the present world, such as it is, if it were lasting,—if it stayed with them when they have caught it, and they stayed with it to enjoy it. But how soon do they part! They pass away, and the glory passes away, both as smoke. Our life itself is as a vapour; and

as for all the pomp and magnificence of those that have the greatest outward glory, and make the fairest shew, it is but a show,—a pageant that goes through the street and is seen no more. But this hath length of days with it—*eternal glory*; oh, a thought of that swallows up all the grandeur of the world, and the noise of reckoning years and ages! Oh that blessed day when the soul shall be full of God,—shall be satisfied and ravished with full vision. Should we not admire that such a condition is provided for man, wretched, sinful man! Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (Psal. viii. 4). Oh the wonder of this! How should it excite us to praise, when we think of such a one there who will bring us up in the way to this crown! How will the hope sweeten the short sufferings of this life! And death itself, which, is otherwise the bitterest, in itself, is more than all sweetened by this, as

being nearest to it, and setting us into it. What, though thou art poor, diseased, and despised here, oh consider what is there now worthy the affection, worthy the earnest eye and fixed look, of an heir of this glory? What can he either desire or fear, whose heart is thus deeply fixed? Who would refuse that other clause, *to suffer awhile*, a little while, anything outward or inward which He thinks fit? How soon shall all this be overpast, and then overpaid in the very entry, at the beginning of this glory that shall never end!

“To Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen,” (Pet. v. 11).

They know little of their own wants and emptiness who are not much in prayer, and they know little of the greatness and goodness of God who are not much in praises. The humble Christian

hath a heart in some measure framed to both. He hath within him the best schoolmaster, who teaches him how to pray, and how to praise, and makes him delight in the exercise of them both. The living praises of God spring from much holy affection, and that affection springs from a Divine light in the understanding. So says the Psalmist:—“*Sing ye praises with understanding, or you that have understanding* (xlvii. 7). It is a spiritual knowledge of God that sets the soul in tune for His praises; and therefore, the most can bear no part in this song; they mistune it quite, through their ignorance of God and unacquaintance with Him. Praise is unseemly in the mouth of fools; they spoil and mistune it. His excellency must be confessed and praised,—his name exalted, that service and homage may be done to Him, which all add nothing to Him, for how can that be? But as it is the duty of such creatures as He hath fitted for it, to render praise

to Him, so it is their happiness. All created things indeed declare and speak His glory; the heavens sound it forth, and the earth and sea resound and echo it back.

Seek a heart purified from self-love, and possessed with the love of God. The heart which is ruled by its own interest is scarcely ever content, still subject to new disquiet. Self is a vexing thing; for all things do not readily suit our humours and wills, and the least touch that is wrong, to a selfish mind, distempers it, and disrelishes all the good things about it. A childish condition it is, if crossed but in a toy, to throw away all. Whence are our frequent frettings and grumbings, and why is it we can drown a hundred high favours in one little displeasure, so that still our finger is upon that string, and there is more malcontent and repining for one little cross, than praises for all the mercies we have received. Is not this evidently from the self-love that abounds

in us? Whereas, were the love of God predominant in us, we should love his doings and disposals, and bless his name in all. Whatsoever were his will, would then be amiable and sweet to us. Thus should we say in all :—This is the will and the hand of my father, who doth all things wisely and well ; blessed is his name.


The soul thus framed would praise in the depths of troubles ; not only in outward afflictions, but in the saddest inward condition, it would still be extolling God and saying :—However He deal with me, He is worthy to be loved and praised. He is great and holy, He is good and gracious, and whatsoever be his way and thoughts toward me, I wish Him glory. Labour for that which on this would follow—*a fixed heart*. If it be refined from creature-love and self-love, spirituality and love of God will fix it, and then shall it be fit to praise, which an unstable, uncomposed heart can never be.

If any due disposition be once attained

for praises, then shall the heart be set to consider the matter of praises.

Study the infinite excellency of God in himself,—that He transcends all we can speak, or hear, or know of Him. Look on Him in his works.

Can we behold the vast heavens above, or the firm earth beneath us, and all the variety of his works in both, without holy wonder excited in us, and that stirring us up to sing praises? Oh his greatness and might and wisdom shining in them! "*Lord how manifest are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all,*" (Psalm civ. 24). But above all, that work, that marvel of his works, the sending forth of his Son from his bosom—this is the mystery which the Apostles do so much magnify in their writings, which is so much magnified in this epistle, and which forms the chief incentive to the ascription of praise with which it closes: "The God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ."



To aim at God in all, is continued praise ; to eye his glory in everything, and chiefly to desire that, as our great end, that his name may be exalted, this is *the excellent way indeed*. Whereas most are either for their *self-ends*, or often squinting out to them. That soul is most noble which singly and fixedly aims at exalting God, and seeks to have this stamp on all it seeks and does and desires. What is so pure and high as this exercise, the praises of the ever glorious-Deity ? What is heaven but these ? And were it not best as we can to begin it here, and long to be there, where it shall never end ? "*To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*"

"*Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus*" (1 Pet. v. 14).

This is a kind of postscript, and contains a testimony of the bearer, and of the apostolic form of saluting. Not only are

we to believe, but to remember that we have the best of it, that there is truth in our hopes, and that they shall not deceive us. They are no fancy, as the world thinks, *but the true grace of God*, yea, when all things else shall vanish, their truth shall most appear in their full accomplishment.

They that are in Christ are the only children and heirs of true peace. Others may dream of it, and have a false peace for a time, and wicked men may wish it to themselves and one to another; but it is a most vain hope, and will come to nought. But to wish it to them that are in Christ hath good ground, for all solid peace is founded on Him. "*Now the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. Amen.*"

MEMOIR,
LETTERS, AND EXTRACTS.

RUTHERFORD.

MEMOIR OF RUTHERFORD.

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD lived about the middle of the seventeenth century, during the reign of Charles I.

He was, as is well known, an eminent minister in the Scotch Church; but in these days he is better known as the writer of a series of letters, replete with Christian truth, and deep, heart-searching, experience, and well calculated to help, warn, and encourage the Christian believer. The style may sometimes be a little quaint; but this belonged to the times in which he wrote, and was then no offence, even "to ears polite." To change the style would be to rob them of their peculiar force. He was one of the delegates of the Scotch Church to the Convocation at Westminster.

In his dying days he seems to have been permitted, abundantly, to realise the truth he had so long and so faithfully taught to others; and richly to partake of the consolations that are in Christ. Some days before his death, he said, "I shall shine—I shall see Christ as He is—I shall see Him reign, and all his fair company with Him. I shall see my Redeemer. This may seem a wide word; but it is no fancy nor delusion, it is true, it is true; let my Lord's name be exalted. If He should slay me ten thousand times ten thousand times, I'll trust."

He often repeated Jeremiah xvi. 16: "*Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.*" Exhorting one to be diligent in seeking God, he said, "'Tis no easy thing to be a Christian; but as for me I have gotten the victory." Though on another occasion he said, "In the beginning of my illness I had my fears, like another sinful man, lest I should faint,

and not be carried through, and I laid this before the Lord—and as surely as He ever spake to me in his Word, as surely his Spirit witnessed to my heart that He had accepted my sufferings. He said to me, ‘Fear not.’ He witnessed to my spirit that his grace was sufficient for me.”

One day, speaking of his own condition, he said,—“I disclaim all that ever He made me will and do and look upon it as imperfect and defiled, as coming from me; and I betake myself to Christ for sanctification as well as justification;” repeating those words, “*He is made of God unto me wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*” He closed with, “Let Him be so. He is my all, in all this.”

On another occasion, when some ladies came to see him, he exhorted them to be “very diligent in reading the scriptures—to be frequent in prayer, and much in communion with God:” adding, “I have my own guiltiness, like another man, but

He, Christ, hath pardoned, loved, and washed, and given me *joy unspeakable and full of glory.*" To another friend, he said,—
"Do all for Christ: preach for Christ—pray for Christ. Beware of men-pleasing; there is too much of it among us."

To his friend Blair,* who asked him what he *now* thought of Christ, he replied, "I shall live, and adore Him. Glory, glory to my Creator and my Redeemer for ever! Glory shines in Immanuel's land!"

And in the afternoon of the same day,—
"Oh that all my brethren may know what a Master I have served, and what peace I have this day. I shall sleep in Christ, and *when I awake I shall be satisfied with his likeness.* This night shall close the door, and put my anchor within the vail, and I shall go away in a sleep by five o'clock in the morning. When some afterwards spoke to him of his faithfulness in the work of God, he replied,—
"I disclaim all that.—The port I would be

* The celebrated Robert Blair.

at is forgiveness and redemption through his blood." Thus closed the earthly pilgrimage of this great and good man.

As he had said, so it was, and by five o'clock the following morning he had, as we most assuredly believe, through the mercy of Him in whom he had long believed, entered into rest.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS

FROM

RUTHERFORD.

TO LADY KENMURE.

If you were not strangers here the dogs of the world would not bark at you. You shall see all the windings and turnings that are in your way to heaven out of God's Word; for He will not lead you to the kingdom at the nearest, but you must go through "*honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing.*" (2 Cor. vi. 8-16.) The world is one of the enemies we have

to fight with, but a vanquished and overcome enemy, and like a beaten and broken soldier; for our Jesus hath taken the armour from it. Let me then speak to you in his words:—"Be of good courage, saith the Captain of our salvation, "for I have overcome the world." I beseech you, in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, keep a good conscience, as I trust you do. You live not upon men's opinions. Gold may be gold, and have the king's stamp upon it, when it is trampled upon by men. Happy are you if, when the world trampleth on you in your credit and good name, yet you are the Lord's gold, stamped with the King of Heaven's image, and sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption. Pray for the spirit of love: "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things."

I charge you, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, pray for those your adversaries. Read this to

your husband, and let both of you put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies. . . . You have lost a child—nay, she is not lost to you who is found in Christ; like unto a star which, going out of our sight, doth not die and vanish, but shineth in another hemisphere. You see her not, yet she doth shine in another country. If her glass was but a short hour, what she wanteth of time that she hath gotten of eternity.

Build your nest upon no tree here; for you see God hath sold the forest to death, and every tree whereupon we would rest is ready to be cut down, to the end we may flee and mount up and build upon the Rock.

TO M. MACKNAUGHT.

My earnest desire is, that you haste not. Stand still, and you shall see the salvation of God.

The Great Master Gardener, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in a remarkable providence, with his own hand, planted me here, where, by his grace, in this part of his vineyard I grow. I would not say but Satan and the world (one of his pages, whom He sends his errands) have said otherwise; but here I will abide, until the Great Master of the vineyard sees fit to transplant me; and when He sees meet to loosen me at the root, and to plant me where I shall be more useful, when He who planted pulleth up that He may transplant, who dare put forth his hand and hinder; if they do, God shall break their arm.

When the Lord is going west, the devil and the world go east; and do you not know that it hath been ever this way, between God and the world—God drawing, and they holding—God yea, and the world nay—but they fall on their back and are frustrate

I pray for you with my whole soul,

and desire that your children may walk in the truth, and that the Lord may shine upon them, and make their faces to shine when the faces of others shall blush. I dare promise them, in his name whose truth I preach, if they will but try God's service that they shall find Him the sweetest Master that ever they served; and desire them from me but to try for a while the service of this blessed Master, and then, if his service be not sweet, if it afford not what is pleasant to the soul's taste, change Him upon trial, and seek a better.

Christ is too often an unknown Christ to young men, and therefore they seek Him not, because they know Him not.

EXTRACT.

I find it hard work to believe, when the course of Providence goeth crossway to our faith; and when misted souls, in a dark night, cannot know east from

west, and our sea compass seemeth to fail us. Every man is a believer in daylight,—a fair day seemeth to be made all of faith and hope. What trial of gold is it to smoke it a little above the fire! But to keep gold perfectly yellow-coloured amidst the flames, and to be turned from vessel to vessel, and yet to cause our furnace to sound and speak and cry the praises of the Lord, is another matter.

We think a little earnest—a small tasting—is all that can be had of Christ in this life (which is true compared with the inheritance), but yet know it is more,—it is the kingdom of God within us.

When doubting whether the providence of God would ever lead him back to Anworth, the scene of his former labours:—“I thank God Anworth is not Heaven; preaching is not Christ—I hope to wait on.”

I would I might begin to be a Christian in earnest, “I need not blame Christ, if I be not one. Verily we know not

what an evil it is to indulge ourselves, and make an idol of our will. Once I would not eat unless I had dainty meat; now I dare not complain of crumbs and parings under His table. Once I would make much ado if I saw not the world set and carved to my liking; now I am silent. I pray God I never may find my will again. Oh! if Christ would subject my will to his, and trample it under his feet. Now, Sir, in your youth gather fast; your sun will mount to the meridian quickly, and thereafter decline. Be greedy of grace.

As far as you are advanced in the way to Heaven, as near as you are to Christ, as much progress as you have made in the way of mortification, you will find that you are far behind, and have most of your work before you.

TO LADY KENMURE.

I observe many who seem to think it holiness enough to complain and

set themselves at nothing, as though to say I am sick would cure them: they think complaints a good charm for guiltiness. I urge upon you, Madam, a nearer communion with Christ, a growing communion. Now, some people but *play with Christianity*; they put it aside easily. I thought it had been an easy thing to be a Christian, and that to seek God had been at the next door: but oh! the windings and turnings, the ups and the downs, that He hath led me through; and I see yet much way to the Lord.

To G—— R——.

Providence hath a thousand keys to open a thousand doors for the deliverance of his own, when it is even come to the greatest extremity. Let us be faithful and care for our own part, which is to do and suffer for Him; and lay Christ's part on Himself, and leave it

there.—Duties are ours—events are the Lord's. When our faith goeth to meddle with events, and to hold a court, if I may so speak, upon God's providence, and beginneth to say, "How wilt thou do this or that?" we lose ground. We have nothing to do there; it is our part to let the Almighty exercise his own office, and steer his own helm; there is nothing left us but to see how we may be approved of Him, and how we may roll the weight of our weak souls upon Him who is God Omnipotent.

Brother, remember the Lord's word to Peter,—“Simon, lovest thou me. Feed my sheep.” No greater testimony of our love to Christ can be than to feed painfully and faithfully his lambs.

TO A LADY ON THE DEATH OF HER
HUSBAND.

Put a low price upon this world's clay;
put a high price upon Christ; be jeal-

ous over yourself and your own heart, and keep near to God. Blind were our hope if it could not look over the water to our best heritage, and if it stayed only at home about the doors of our clay house. If you do but get Christ, howbeit not just the sweet and pleasant way you would have Him, it is enough, for the Well-beloved cometh not our way. He must choose his own way for himself.

I would counsel you to buy hope and sell it not; give not away your crosses for nothing.

EXTRACT.

Happy is your soul if Christ man the house, and take the keys himself, and command all.

Salvation is not an easy thing and soon gotten. I often told you few are saved, and many, many lost; I pray you make your poor soul sure of salvation, and make the seeking of Heaven your

daily task. If you never had a sick night and a pained soul for sin, you have not yet come to Christ. Look to the right marks of having come to Christ: if you love Him better than the world, and would quit all the world for Him, then that saith—the work is sound. Many are painfully toiled in seeking many things, and their many things are nothing.

It is best that you set yourself apart for Christ alone. He hath been going about you these many years, by [afflictions, to engage you to himself. It were a pity and a loss to say Him nay.

TO LADY B——.

Think well of the visitations of our Lord; for I see one thing which I saw not well before,—that when the saints are under trials and well humbled, little sins raise great cries and war-shouts in the conscience; but in prosperity, conscience is a pope to give dispensations ar

let out and in. Oh, how little care we for pardon at Christ's hand when we make ourselves dispensations! And all is but bairns' play till a cross without beget a heavier cross within, and then we play no longer with our idols. It is good yet to be severe against ourselves.

EXTRACT.

I find it true that the greatest temptation out of hell is to live without temptations. . . . Faith is the better for the free air and the sharp winter storm in its face; grace withereth without adversity. . . . As for myself, I am pained at heart that I cannot find myself disposed to leave myself and go *wholly* to Christ. We have too much room for our own ease and credit and pleasure, and so little room for all-love-worthy Christ.

TO LADY B——.

That, then, which our Lord intendeth in all our sufferings is to bring grace

in court and request among us. His mercy hath a set period and appointed time how far and no further the sea of affliction shall flow, and where the waves thereof shall be stayed. He prescribeth how much pain and sorrow, both for weight and measure, we must have. He who is afflicted in all your afflictions, looketh not on you in your sad hours with an insensible heart or dry eyes. All the Lord's saints may see that it is lost love which is bestowed on this perishing world;—death and judgment will make them see this.

Our debts of obligation to Christ are not small—the freedom of grace and salvation is the wonder of man and angels; but mercy in our Lord scorneth hire.

You are bound to lift Christ on high who hath given you eyes to discern the devil, now coming out in white, and the idolatry and apostasy of the time, well washed with fair pretences.

TO LADY B——.

I received your letter. I wish I could satisfy your desire that I should draw out a Christian directory for you; but the learned have done it before. Nevertheless I will show you what I would have been at, myself, although I came always short of my purpose.

1st. That some hours of the day—less or more time—for the Word and prayer be given to God. 2nd. In the midst of worldly employments there should be some thoughts of sin, judgment, death and eternity; with now and then a word or two of ejaculatory prayer to God. 3rd. To beware of wandering of heart in private prayer. 4th. Not to grudge, although you come from prayer without sense of joy. 5th. Downcasting sense of guiltiness and hunger are often best for us. 6th. That the Lord's day be spent as much as may be, from morning to night, in public or private devotion, 7th. That

in dealing with men faith and truth in covenants and trafficking be regarded ; that we make conscience even of idle words, and that our carriage be such, that they who see it may speak honourably of our Master and profession.

Let pleasures and gain, will and desires, of this world, be put over in God's hands, as arrested and fenced goods that you cannot meddle with.

Now when you are drinking the grounds of your cup, and you are upon the utmost ends of the last links of time ; and old age, like death's long shadow, is casting a covering upon your days, it is no time to court this vain life, and to set love and heart upon it. It is near after supper ; seek rest and ease for your soul in God through Christ.

To C—— E——.

Believe me I find it hard wrestling to keep a constant course of sound and solid

daily communion with Christ; temptations are daily breaking the thread of that course, and it is not easy to cast a knot again; and many knots make evil work. Oh how fair have many ships been plying before the wind that in an hour's space have been lying in the sea bottom. How many professors cast a golden lustre, as though they were pure gold, and yet are, under that skin and cover, but base and reprobate metal. . . . False, underwater, not seen on the ground of an enlightened conscience, is dangerous; so is often failing and sinning against light. Know this, that he who never had sick nights, nor days in conscience for sin, cannot have but such a peace with God as will break the flesh again, and end in a sad war of death. . . .

Be humbled—walk softly—down, down, for God's sake, my dear and worthy brother, with your topsail. Stoop—stoop—it is a low entry to go in at heaven's gate. . . . It is violence to corrupt

nature for a man to be holy, to lie down under Christ's feet, to quit will, pleasure, worldly love, earthly hope, and an itching of heart after this over-gilded world, and to be content that Christ trample upon all.

TO JOHN GONELEN.

*Considerations to be attended to in making
our salvation sure.*

DEAR BROTHER,—I earnestly desire to know the state of your soul, and to understand that you have made sure work of heaven and salvation.

1st. Remember it is violent striving that taketh heaven.

2nd. That it cost Christ's blood to purchase that house to sinners, and to set mankind down as the King's free tenants.

3rd. That many make a start towards heaven. Many go far on, and reform many things, and wish and desire the end of the righteous, as Balaam did ; and pro-

fess fair, and fight for the Lord, as Saul did; and desire the saints of God to pray for them, as Pharaoh and Simon Magus did; and prophesy and speak of Christ, as Caiaphas did; and put away gross sins and idolatry, as Jehu did; and hear the word of God gladly, and reform their life in many things, and say Master, to Christ—I will follow thee, whither thou goest, and may taste of the good word of Christ, as the apostates, who sin against the Holy Ghost (Heb. vi.) :—and yet all these may be but like gold in clink and colour.

. . . . These are written that we should try ourselves, and not rest till we be a step nearer Christ than sun-burnt and withering professors can come.

4th. Consider:—it is impossible that you and your idol sins can go to heaven together.; and that those who will not part with them do not indeed love Christ at the bottom, but only in word and show, which will never do the business.

5th. Remember how swiftly God's post-

time flieth away, and that your forenoon is already spent; your afternoon will come, and then your evening, and, at last, night, when you cannot see to work. Let your heart be set upon finishing your journey, and summing and laying your accounts with your Lord. Oh how blessed shall you be to have a joyful welcome of your Lord at night!—Oh how blessed are they who, in time, take sure course with their souls! Bless his great name for what you possess in goods and children and worldly contentment, and seek to be like Christ in humility and lowliness, of mind; and be not great and entire with the world—make it not your god, that you trust unto, for it will deceive you.

I recommend Christ and his love to you in all things. Let Him have the flower of your heart and your love. Set a low price on all things but Christ—all that will not comfort you when you get summons to remove, and appear before your Judge, to answer for all the deeds

done in the body. Be temperate and sober: fellowship with the bad is a sin that holdeth men out of heaven.

. TO THE LADY LARGERIE.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. I exhort you in the Lord to go on in your journey to heaven, and to be content with such fare by the way as Christ and his followers have had before you, for they had always the wind in their faces; and our Lord hath not changed the way to us. . . . Alas! how doth sin clog us in our journey and retard us. . . . Oh! that our soul would fall so at odds with this world, as to think of it, as a traveller does of a drink of water which is not any part of his treasure, but goeth away with the using; for ten miles journey, maketh that drink to him as nothing. Oh! that we had as soon done

with this world, and could as quickly despatch the love of it! But as a child cannot hold in its little hand two apples at once, but the one putteth the other out of its room; so neither can we be masters and lords of two worlds. Blessed were we if we could make ourselves masters of that invaluable treasure, the love of Christ; or rather, suffer ourselves to be mastered and subdued to Christ's love, so that Christ wins, our all things, and all other things our nothings. . . . Oh, let us be ready for shipping against the time our Lord's wind and tide calls for us! Death is the last thief that shall come, without din or noise of feet, and take our souls away, and we shall take our leave of time, and face eternity. . . . Seek to be found of your Lord in peace, and put your soul in order; for Christ will not give a nailbreadth of time to our little sand-glass. . . .

TO EARLSTOUN.

I rejoice in the hope of the glory to be revealed ; for it is no uncertain glory we look for ; our hope is not hung upon such an untwisted thread as, "I imagine so," and "It is likely ;" but the cable, the strong tow of our fastened anchor, is the oath and promise of Him who is eternal Verity. Our salvation is fastened with God's own hand, and with Christ's own strength to the strong support of God's unchangeable nature ; "*I am the Lord, I change not, and therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*"—(Mal. ii. 6.)

Oh ! if our faith could ride it out against the high and proud winds and waves, when our sea seemeth all to be on fire ! Oh ! how oft do I let my grips go ! I am put to swimming and am half sinking. I find Satan hath the advantage of the ground in this battle ; for he fighteth on

known ground, in our corrupt nature. And hence it is, that He who saveth to the uttermost, and leadeth many sons to glory, is still righting my salvation.

Twenty times a day I ravel my heaven, and then I must come with my ill-ravelled work to Christ, to encumber Him as it were, to right it, and to seek again the right end of the thread, and to fold up again my eternal glory with his own hand, and to give a right cast of his holy and gracious hand to my marred and spoiled salvation. Certainly it is a cumbersome thing to keep a foolish child from falls and broken bones, and weeping for this and that toy, and sickness, and bairns' diseases; ere he get through them all, he costeth no little care to his keepers. And so is a believer a cumbersome piece of work and ill-ravelled hesp* (as we used to say) to Christ; but God be thanked, for many spoiled salvations and many ill-ravelled hesps which Christ hath mended,

* Fastening.

since first He entered tutor to lost mankind. Oh, what could we bairns do without Him ! How soon should we mar all ! But the less of our weight be upon our own feeble legs ; and the more on Christ, the strong Rock, the better for us. It is good for us that ever Christ took the cumber of us ; it is our Heaven to lay many weights and burdens upon Christ, and to make Him all we have, root and top, beginning and ending of our salvation. Lord hold us here ! Now to this tutor and rich Lord I recommend you. Hold fast till He come, and remember me his prisoner. Grace, grace be with you.

TO J. B——.

On Dishonouring Christ by Unbelief, &c.

DEAR AND WORTHY SIR,—Separate yourself from such lazy professors as think their own faith best, because it is their own,

and content themselves to summer and winter in that sort of profession which the multitude and the times favour most. This is the compass they sail toward heaven by, instead of a better.

Bend yourself to the utmost of your strength and breath, in running fast for salvation. It cost Christ and all his followers sharp showers and hot sweats ere they got to the top of the mountain; still our soft nature would have heaven coming to our bed-side when we are sleeping, that we might go to heaven in warm clothes; but all that have come there have found sharp storms by the way. It is impossible a man can take his lusts to heaven with him; such wares as these will not be welcome there. Oh! blessed are they who can deny themselves, and put Christ in the room of themselves. Oh! would to the Lord I had not a myself, but Christ; not a my ease, but Christ; not a my honour, but Christ. Oh! sweet word: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me (Gal. ii. 20).

EXTRACT.

I know that Christ is not obliged to let me see both the sides of my cross, and turn it over and over, that I may see all. My faith is richer to live upon credit. . . . When I say, "Christ is God," and "My Christ is God," I have said all things; I can say no more. I would I could build as much on this "My Christ is God," as it would bear; I might lay all the world upon it.

My desire is that my Lord would give me broader and deeper thoughts to feed myself with wondering at his love. I would I could weigh it, but I have no balance for it.

TO MARGARET B——.

Aberdeen, 1637.

It is more than time that I should have written to you; but it is yet good time if
to your soul to mend your pace,

and to go more swiftly to your heavenly country ; for truly you have need to make all haste, because the inch of your day that remaineth will quickly slip away ; for whether we sleep or wake, our glass runneth,—the tide abideth no man. Beware of a beguile in the matter of your salvation. Woe ! woe ! for evermore to one who loses that prize ; for what is behind when the soul is once lost !

To C—— E——.

MUCH HONOURED AND DEAREST IN THE LORD,—Now in the end of your days, I beseech you make sure of heaven ; examine yourself if you be in good earnest in Christ ; for some are “ partakers of the Holy Ghost, and taste of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come,” (Heb. vi. 4, 5), and yet have no part in Christ at all. Many think they believe, but never tremble ; the devils may be further on than they (James ii. 19).

TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

I would be loth to put you off your fears and your sense of deadness (I wish it were more); there are some wounds whose bleeding should not be too soon stopped. You must take a house beside the Physician; it shall be a miracle if you be the first man put away uncured and worse than He found you. Nay, nay, Christ is honest, and in this freely arguing with sinners, "He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," (John vi. 37). Take that, it cannot be presumption to take it as your own, when you find your wounds pain you. Presumption is ever whole at the heart, and hath but the truant sickness, and groaneth only for the fashion. Faith hath sense of sickness, looketh like a friend to the promises, and, looking to Christ therein, is glad to see a known face. . . .

Be not ashamed because of your guiltiness; necessity must not blush to beg.

Your heart is not the compass Christ saileth by. You have gotten a great advantage in the way to heaven that you have started to the gate in the morning. Like a fool as I was, I suffered the sun to be high in the heaven and near afternoon before even I took the gate by the end. I pray you now keep the advantage you have. My heart, be not lazy, set quickly up the hill on hands and feet, as if the last grain of sand were running out of your glass, and death were coming to turn the glass. Be very careful to take heed to your feet in the slippery and dangerous way of youth. . . . Be covetous of the grace of God, and beware that it be not holiness that cometh only from affliction ; for too many are that way disposed.

“When He slew them, then they sought Him, and they returned and inquired early after God (Psalm lxxviii. 34). “Nevertheless they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues,” (verse 36).

Try well green godliness, and examine what it is you love in Christ; if you love only the sunny side of Christ, and would have only summer weather, your profession will play you a slip, and the winter-well will go dry again in summer. Make no sports, no bairns' play, of Christ; but labour for a sound and lively sight of sin, that you may judge yourself an undone man, a slave of hell and sin, except Christ come and pity you and take you up. Therefore make fast and sure work of conversion; cast the earth deep; and down, down with the old work, the building of confusion that was there before, and let Christ lay new work, and make a new creation within you. . . . Look if Christ's rain go down to the root of your withered plant. . . . I know Christ will not be hid where He is; grace will ever speak for itself, and be fruitful in well-doing. The sanctified cross is a fruitful tree, it bringeth forth many apples.

If I should tell you by some weak experience what I have found in Christ, you and others could hardly believe me. I thought not the hundredth part of Christ long ago that I now do ; though, alas ! my thoughts are still infinitely below his worth. And as for Christ's cross, especially the garland and flower of all crosses, to suffer for his name, I esteem it more than I can write and declare to you.

Now would to God that all faint-hearted soldiers of Christ would look again to 'Jesus and his love ; and when they look, I would have them look again and again.

TO LADY GAITGIRTH.

Grace, mercy, and peace be with you. I long to know how matters stand betwixt Christ and your soul. I know you find Him still, the longer, the better, time cannot change Him in his love. You

may yourself ebb and flow, rise and fall, wax and wane ; but your Lord is this day as He was yesterday ; and it is your comfort that your salvation is not rolled upon wheels of your own making, neither have you to do with a Christ of your own shaping. God hath singled out a Mediator, strong and mighty : if you and your burdens were as heavy as ten hills, He is able to bear you, and save you to the uttermost. Your often seeking Him cannot make you a burden to him. I know Christ compassioneth you in all your down-castings ; but it is good for you that He hideth himself sometimes. It is not coldness of love that causeth Christ to withdraw, that you cannot see Him ; but He knoweth you could not bear with up-sails, a fair gale, a full moon, and a high spring-tide of his felt love ; and always a fair summer-day. . . . Cast the burden of your sweet babes upon Christ ; and lighten your heart by laying your *all* upon Him ; *He will be their God*. I hope to

see you up the mountain yet, and glad in the salvation of God. Frame yourself upon Christ, and be not gloomy upon his cross.

TO JOHN STEWART.

Oh, how sweet were one line or half a letter of a written assurance under Christ's own hand ! But this is our exercise daily ; that guilt shall ever mist and darken assurance. It is a miracle to believe ; but that a sinner should believe is a double miracle. But oh, what obligations of love are we under to Christ !

Who could be saved if God were not God, and such a God as He is ! God be thanked that our salvation is coasted and landed and shored upon Christ, who is master of winds and storms—and what sea winds and storms can blow the land out of its place. *Bulwarks* are often cast down, but *coasts* are not removed.

I know not if my Lord will bring me

to his sanctuary or not ; but I know He hath the placing me either within or without the house, and that nothing will be done without him. But I am often thinking and saying within myself, My days flee away, and I see no good, neither yet Christ's work thriving. My thoughts go away, that I fear they meet not God ; but I hold my peace here. Let Him do his will.

TO CARSNETT.

Aberdeen, 1637.

I long to hear how your soul prospereth.
. . . . I earnestly desire you to try
how matters stand between your soul and
the Lord. Think it no easy matter to take
heaven by violence ; salvation cometh now
to the most part of men in a night-dream.
There is no scarcity of faith now, such as
it is ; for you shall not now light upon the
man who will not *say* he hath faith in

Christ. But, alas ! dreams make no man's rights. . . . Take pains for your salvation ; for in that day when you shall see many men's labours and conquests, and idol riches, lying in ashes ; when the earth and all the works thereof shall be burnt with fire, oh ! how dear a price would your soul give for God's favour in Christ. It is a blessed thing to see Christ with up-sun, and to read over your papers and soul accounts with fair daylight : it will be no time to cry for a lamp when the Bridegroom is entered into his chamber, and the door shut. . . . There is a grèat deal less of sand in your glass than when I saw you, and your afternoon is nearer eventide than it was then. As a bird carried back to the sea, so doth the Lord's quick post-time carry you and your life with wings to the grave. You eat and drink, but time standeth not still ; you laugh, but your day fleeth away ; you sleep, but your hours are reckoned and put by. Oh ! how soon will time shut

you out of the poor and cold and hungry joys of this life! and then what will yesterday's short-born pleasures do to you, but be as a snowball melted away many years since, or wasted; for the memory of these pleasures useth to fill the soul with bitterness. Time and experience will prove this to be true, and dying men, if they could speak, could make this good.

Your errand in this life is to make sure an eternity of glory to your soul—I doubt not but in death you will see all things more distinctly, and that then the world shall bear no more bulk than it is worth—that then it shall be contracted into nothing, and you shall see Christ longer, higher, broader, deeper, than ever He was. Oh blessed conquest, to lose all things, and to gain Christ! I know not what you have if you want Christ. Alas! how poor is your gain, if the earth were all yours in free heritage, holding it of a man of clay, if Christ be not yours.

Oh, lay all oars in the water, put forth all your power, and bend all your endeavours to put away and part with all things, so that you may gain and enjoy Christ ! Try, and search his Word, and strive to go a step above and beyond ordinary professors, and resolve to labour more, and run faster, than they do for salvation.

Men's midway, cold, and wise courses in godliness, and their neighbourlike, cold, and wise pace to heaven, will cause many a man to want his lodging at night. I recommend Christ and his love to your seeking, and yourself to the tender mercy and rich grace of our Lord.

TO CASSICARRIE.

Aberdeen, 1837.

Oh, happy soul, for evermore, who can rightly compare this life with that long, lasting, life to come, and can balance the

weighty glory of the one, with the light, golden vanity of the other ! The day of the Lord is now near at hand, and all men shall come out in their blacks and whites as they are. There shall be no borrowed lying colours in that day. . . . Now men borrow Christ, and his white colour, and the lustre and show of Christianity ; but how many counterfeit masks will be burnt in the day of God, in the fire that shall burn the earth, and the works that are therein ; and, howbeit Christ have the hardest part of it now, yet, in the presence of my Lord, whom I serve in the Spirit, I would not exchange Christ's prison, bonds and chains, with the gold chains and lordly rents, and smiling and happy-like heavens, of the men of this world. I am far from thoughts of repenting for my losses and bonds, for Christ. I wish all my adversaries were as I am, except these bonds.

It is not our part to make a treasure here ; anything, under the covering of

heaven, we can build upon, is but ill-ground and a sandy foundation

Every good thing, except God, wanteth a bottom, and cannot stand alone; how then can it bear the weight of us? Let us not lay a load upon a straw! We weak souls must have a foundation and a being-place, for we cannot stand alone. Let us, then, be wise in our choice, and choose our own blessedness, which is to trust in the Lord.

TO A CHRISTIAN GENTLEWOMAN.

Faint not, the miles to heaven are but few and short. . . . There are many heads in Christ's bosom, but there is room for yours among the rest; and, therefore, go on, and let hope go before you.

Sin not in your trials, and the victory is yours.—Pray, wrestle, and believe, and you shall overcome and prevail with God, as Jacob did; no straws, no bits of clay, no temptations which are of no longer

life than an hour, will then be able to withstand you, when you have once prevailed with God.

Now I will bless the Lord that ever there was such a thing as the free grace of God, and a free ransom given for captive souls. Only, alas! guiltiness (sometimes) maketh me ashamed to apply to Christ, and to think it pride in me to put out my unclean and withered hand to such a Saviour; but it is neither shame nor pride for a drowning man to swim to a rock, nor for a ship-broken soul to run himself ashore upon Christ. . . . It is best for us—let guiltiness plead what it listeth—that we have no means, under the covering of heaven, but to creep in, lowly and submissively, with our wants to Christ I have not yet learned, as I should do, to put my stock and all my treasure into Christ's hands; but I would have a stock of mine own, and ere I was aware, I was taking hire to be the law's advocate, to seek justification by

works. I forgot that grace is the only garland that is worn in heaven upon the heads of the glorified.

EXTRACT.


Oh come to Christ! Oh come all, and drink at this living well! Come drink, and live for evermore.—Come drink, and welcome—welcome, saith the Bridegroom. No man getteth Christ with ill-will; no man cometh and is not welcome; no man cometh and rueth his voyage. All men speak well of Christ who have been with Him.

TO LORD BOYD.

Grace, mercy, and peace be with you. I am glad to hear that you, in the morning of your short day, mind Christ, and that you love the honour of his crown and kingdom. Stand by your first covenant, and keep to Jesus, that He may find you

honest It is easy to master an arrow and to set it right ere the string be drawn ; but when once it is shot, and in the air, and the flight begun, you have no power at all to command it. It were a blessed thing that your love should now level only at Christ ; for when your love is loosed and out of your grips, and gone to seek a strange lover, you have no power to call home the arrow. I speak not this as if youth itself could fetch Heaven and Christ ; believe it, my lord, it is hardly credible what a nest of temptations youth is ; how inconsiderate, foolish, vain, and careless of God ; so that the devil in that age findeth a garnished and swept house for himself.

Then a green conscience is as supple as the twig of a young tree ; it is for every way, every religion ; every new course prevaieth with it. And, therefore, what a sweet couple what a glorious yoke, are youth and grace—Christ and a young man ! Bits of lordships are



little to Him who hath many crowns on his head ; and the kingdoms of this world in the hollow of his hand. . . . Court, honour, glory, riches, stability of houses, favour of princes, are all on His finger-ends. Oh what glory were it to send you home to Christ and to his Jerusalem. You are one of Zion's sons ; your honourable and Christian parents would venture you upon Christ's errands ; therefore, I beseech you, by the mercies of God, by the death and wounds of Jesus, by the hope of your glorious inheritance, and by the comfort and hope of the joyful presence you would have at the water-side, when you are putting your feet in the dark grave, take courage for Christ's truth, and the honour of his free kingdom : for, howbeit you be a young flower and green before the sun, you know not how soon death will cause you to cast your bloom, and wither, root and branch and leaves ; and, therefore, write up what you have to do for Christ, and make a

treasure of good works, and begin in time.

By appearance you have the advantage of the brae.* See what you can do for Christ against those who are waiting until Christ's tabernacle fall, that they may run away with the boards thereof, and build their nest on Zion's ruins.

It goeth now under the name of wisdom for men to cast their cloak over Christ and their profession; as though Christ were stolen goods, and durst not be avouched.

TO THE LADY GAITGIRTH.

Take no heavier lift of your children than the Lord alloweth; give them room beside your heart, but not in the yolk of your heart, where Christ should be; for then they are your idols, not your bairns. If your Lord take any of them home to his house before the storm come on, take

* Hill.

it well : the owner of the orchard may take down two or three apples off his own trees before midsummer, and ere they get the harvest sun ; and it would not be seemly that his servant, the gardener, should chide him. Let our Lord pluck his own fruit at any season he pleaseth : they are not lost to you ; they are laid up so well as that they are coffered in heaven, where our Lord's best jewels lie : they are all free goods that are there ; death can have no law to arrest anything that is within the walls of the new Jerusalem.

To —.

Advice to Youth.

LOVING FRIEND,—I entreat you now, in the morning of your life, seek the Lord and his face. Beware of the folly of dangerous youth—a perilous time for your soul ; love not the world ; keep faith and truth with all men in your covenants and bargains ; walk with God, for he seeth you. Do nothing but that which ye

may and would do if your eye-strings were breaking and your breath growing cold. You have heard the truth of God from me : follow it, and forsake it not. Prize Christ and salvation above all the world.

To live after the guise and course of the rest of the world will not bring you to heaven : without faith in Christ, and repentance, you cannot see God. Take pains for salvation ; press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling. If you watch not night and day against evils that beset, you will come behind.

Beware of all evil habits : for “ *because of these things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.*” How sweet soever they may seem for the present, yet the end of these courses is the eternal wrath of God, and utter darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Grace be with you.

Your loving pastor,

S. B.

TO ROBERT GARDEN.

June 1, 1638.

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER. — Grace, mercy and peace be unto you. I thought to have answered your two letters upon this occasion, though I cannot say all that I would. Your timely word, not to delight in the cross, but in Him who sweeteneth it, came to me in due season. I find the consolations and off-fallings that follow the cross of Christ so sweet, that I almost forget myself. My desire and purpose is, when Christ's honeycombs drop, neither to refuse to receive and feed upon his comforts, nor yet to make joy my false god, nor new-found heaven. If joy and comfort came single and alone, without Christ himself, I think I would send them back again the gate they came, and not make them welcome; but when the King's train cometh, and the King in the midst of the company! oh, how am I

overjoyed with floods of love ! I fear not that the great floods of love wash away the growing corn, and loose my plant at the roots ; but, certainly, I would wish such spiritual wisdom as to love the Bridegroom better than his gifts.

Anworth, 1630.

TO THE PARISHIONERS OF KILMACOLME,
*On their complaint of Spiritual Sloth and
Weakness, a dead Ministry, &c.*

WORTHY AND WELL-BELOVED IN CHRIST
JESUS OUR LORD,—Grace, mercy, and
peace be to you. I would not have you
pitch upon me, as the man able by letters
to answer doubts of this kind, while there
are in your bounds men of such great
parts, more able for this work. I know
the best are unable ; yet it pleaseth the
Spirit of Jesus to blow his sweet wind
through a piece of dry stick, that the
empty reed may keep no glory to itself,

but a minister can make no such wind as this to blow.

Know that the wind of this Spirit hath a time when it bloweth sharp, and pierceth so strongly, that it would blow through an iron door, and this commonly rather under suffering for Christ than at any other time. Oh! if I had but the leavings of a sufferer's table. . . . But I leave this to answer you.

You write, that God's vows are lying on you, and security strong and akin to nature stealing on you who are weak. I answer:—

1st. Till we be in heaven, the best have heavy heads, as is evident, Psalm xxx. 6; Job xxix. 18; Matt. xxvi. 33. Sorrow for a slumbering soul is a token of some watchfulness of spirit; grace in us too often is abused, and there is as much reason to watch over grace as to watch over sin. Full men will soon sleep, sooner than hungry men.

To want complaints of weakness is for

heaven, and for angels that never sinned; not for Christians in Christ's camp on earth: if there were no diseases on earth, there needed no physicians on earth. Oh! how sweet is it for a sinner to put his weakness in Christ's strengthening hand, and to take a sick soul to such a physician.

2nd. Ye tell me there is need of counsel for strengthening new beginners. I can say little to that, who am not well begun myself; but I know honest beginnings are nourished by Him, even by Jesus, who never yet put out a poor man's dim candle, who is wrestling between light and darkness. I am sure, if new beginners would fling themselves upon Christ and press their souls upon Him, and *importune* Him for a draught of his love, they could not come wrong to Christ.

3rd. Whereas ye complain of a dead ministry in your bounds, ye are to remember that the Bible among you is the contract of your marriage; and the manner of Christ's conveying his love to your

hearts is not so absolutely dependent even upon lively preaching, as that there is no conversion at all, no life of God but that which is tied to a *man's lips*. The daughters of Jerusalem have done often that which the watchman could not do. Make Christ your minister; he needeth not us. Oh! blessed soul that can look over a man up to Christ who can preach home to the heart, howbeit we were all dead and gone.

4th. There is, ye write, willingness to use means, but heaviness after the use of them, because of the formal and slight performance. In Christ's absence, I confess the work lieth behind; but if ye mean absence of comfort, and absence of sense of his sweet presence, I think that absence is Christ's trying of us, not simply our sin against him.

5th. Ye hold that Christ must have either hearty service, or no service at all. If ye mean He will not have half a heart, or feigned service, such as the hypocrites

give him, I grant you that—Christ must have honesty or nothing : but if ye mean He will have no service at all, when the heart draweth back in *any measure* would not that were true for my part of heaven, and all that I have in the world.

If ye mind to walk to heaven without a cramp or a crook, I fear you must go alone : He knoweth our dross and defects, and pitieth us when weakness and deadness of our obedience is our cross, and not our darling.

Welcome home faith in Jesus, who washeth still when we have defiled our souls. Seek still the blood of atonement for faults little or much. Know the gate to the well, and lie about it. Make much of assurance ; for it keepeth your anchor fixed.

6th. I judge it not unlawful to seek renewed consolations, providing, 1st, The heart be submissive and content to leave the measure and timing of them to Him. 2nd, Provided they be sought to excite

us to prove and strengthen our assurance, and sharpen our desires after Himself. 3rd, Let them be sought, not for our humours, and swelling of nature, but as the earnest of heaven. And I think many do attain to greater consolations after mortification than ever they had formerly.

TO A FRIEND IN PRISON.

Let your faith trust God a little, and be not afraid for a smoking firebrand; there is more smoke in Babylon's furnace than there is fire. Christ will gather all his wheat into his barn, only let your fellowship with Him be renewed. . . . Let faith live and breathe, and lay hold on the sure salvation of God, when clouds and darkness are about you. Beware of saying, "*Doth his promise fail for evermore?*" Oh, mighty word of faith!—"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job xiii. 15). Oh, sweet epitaph written on the gravestone of a dying

believer, namely, "I died hoping." Faith's eyes, that can see through a millstone, can see through a gloom of God, and under it read God's thoughts of love and peace. Hold fast to Christ in the dark ; surely ye shall see the salvation of God.

TO A FRIEND WHO SEEMS TO HAVE LAMENTED
THE WITHDRAWING OF SENSIBLE COMFORT.

I approve your going to the Fountain when your own cistern is dry. A difference there must be between Christ's well and your borrowed water ; and why ? because you have need of emptiness and drying up, as well as you have need of the well.

TO MY VERY DEAR FRIEND JOHN FENNICK.

It is not much to complain ; but rather *believe* than complain and sit in the dust ; and close your mouth, till He make your sown light grow again ; for your afflictions

are not eternal, time will end them, and so shall you at length see the Lord's salvation. His love sleepeth not, but is still working for you, and suffering for Him is the noblest cross out of heaven.

If your deliverance come not, Christ's presence and his believed love must stand as surety for your deliverance. . . . It is not much matter, if you find ease to your afflicted soul, what be the means, either of your own wishing or God's choosing ; the latter I am sure is best, and the comfort strongest and sweetest. Let the Lord absolutely have the ordering of your evils and troubles, and put them off you by recommending your cross and your furnace to Him who hath skill to melt his own metal and knoweth well what to do with his furnace. Let your heart be willing that God's fire have your tin and brass and dross.

TO LADY BOYD.

On the death of several friends by a wonderful and sudden providence.

I wish I could speak or write what would do good to you ; especially now when I think you cannot but have deep thoughts of the deep and bottomless ways of the Lord, in taking away, by a sudden and wonderful stroke, your brethren and friends. You may know that all that die *for* sin, die not *in* sin, and that none can teach the Almighty knowledge ; He answereth none of our courts, and no man can say, "What doest thou ?" It is true your brethren saw not many summers ; but adore and fear the sovereignty of the Great Potter, who maketh and marreth the clay vessels when and how it pleaseth Him. Oh, what wisdom is it to believe and not to dispute !

It is impossible to be submissive and religiously patient, if you stay your

thoughts down among the confused rollings and wheels of second causes, as, "Oh the place!" "Oh, the time!" "Oh, if this had been, this had not followed!" Look up to the master motion, and the first wheel. . . . They see far into a millstone, and have eyes that make a hole to see through the one side of a mountain to the other. Who can take up his ways? *How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.*

It is faith's work to claim and challenge loving-kindness out of all the roughest strokes of God. And seeing time's thread is short, and you are upon the entry of heaven's harvest, and Christ the field of heaven's glory is white and ripe-like; the losses that I write of to your ladyship are but summer showers, that will only wet your garments for an hour or two. . . . It is much for our half-slain affections to part with that which we believe we have right unto; but the servant's will should be our will; and he is the best servant

who retaineth least of his own will, and most of his master's.

On the Death of a Child.

If the Lord hath taken away your child, your lease of him is expired. It is your part to worship and adore the sovereignty and liberty that the Potter hath over the clay that he gave life to. And what is man to call and summon the Almighty to his lower court, down here? For he giveth account of none of his doings. And if you will take a loan of a child and give him back to the Lord, smiling, as his borrowed goods, believe me he is not gone away, but sent before, and that the change of the country should make you think he is not lost to you who is found in Christ, and that he is now before you, and that the dead in Christ shall be raised again. A going-down star is not annihilated, but shall appear again.

The difference of your shipping and his to heaven and to Christ's shore, the land of life, is only in some few years, which wear every day shorter.

If death were a sleep that had no wakening, we might sorrow; but Christ was death's surety. And that Lord Jesus who knoweth the turnings and windings that are in that dark trance of death, hath numbered all the steps of the stairs up to heaven. He knoweth how long the road is, for He ascended that way himself—"I was dead, and am alive," (Rev. i. 18). And now He liveth at the right hand of God. . . . Take kindly and heart-somely with his cross, who never yet slew a child with the cross. He mixeth your cup, therefore drink it patiently, and with the better will.

Death, from Adam to the second Adam's appearance, playeth the king, and reigneth over all. The prime Heir died; his children which the Lord hath given follow Him, and we may speak freely of the life which

is here. Were *it* heaven, there were not much gain in godliness; but there is a *rest* for the people of God—Christ-Man possesseth it now one thousand six hundred years before many of his members, but it weareth not out. Grace be with you

To —,

On Sufferings and Triumphs in the Church.

. . . . It may be that I am incapable of new light, and cannot receive that Spirit whereof some vainly boast; but “that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled,” even *the Word of life* (1 John i. 3,) hath been declared to you. Thousands of thousands walking in that light, and that good old way, have gone to heaven, and are now before the throne; truth is but one and hath no numbers. Christ and Antichrist are now

both in the camp, and are come to open blows. Christ's poor ship saileth in the sea of blood ; the passengers are sea-sick of a high fever, so that they miscall one another ; Christ, I hope, shall bring their broken bark to land. I had rather swim for life and death on an old plank and broken board to land with Christ, than enjoy the rotten peace we have hitherto had.

It is likely the Lord will take a severe course with us to cause the children of the family to agree together. A cross of our own choosing, honeyed and sugared with consolations, we cannot have. I think not much of a cross when all the children oft he house weep with me and for me ; and to suffer when we enjoy the communion of saints is not much, but it is hard when saints enjoy the sufferings of saints.

The saints are not Christ ; there is no misjudging in Him, there is much in us ; and a doubt it is if we shall have full one heart till we enjoy one heaven.

TO LADY KENMURE.

St. Andrews, July 24.

Complaint of abounding iniquity—Necessity of a close walk with God.

MADAM,—I am a little moved at your infirmity of body and health ; I hope it is to you a real warning. And *if in this life only we had hope, we should be of all men most miserable.* Surely the huge generations of the seekers of the face of Jacob's God must be in a life above the things that are now much taking with us ; such as to see the sun, to enjoy this life in health, and some good worldly accommodation too, and if we be making that sure it is our wisdom. The times would make any that love the Lord sick and faint to consider how iniquity abounds, and how dull we are in observing sins in ourselves, and how quick-sighted to find them out in others. and what bondage we

are in ; and yet very often when we complain of times, we are secretly slandering the Lord's work and wise government of the world, and raising a hard report of Him. He is good, and does good, and all his ways are equal.

Madam,—I have been to some other—Oh, if I could to myself!—holding out some more of this to read and study God well, and make the serious thoughts of a Godhead, and a Godhead in Christ, the work, and the only work, all the day. Oh, we are little with God ! and do almost all without God. How often we sleep and wake without Him ; we eat, we speak, we journey, we go about worldly business and our calling, without God ! And, considering what deadness is upon the hearts of many, it were good that some did not *pray* without God, and preach and praise, and read and confer of God, without God.

It is universally complained of that there is a strange deadness upon the land, and on the hearts of his people. Oh if

we could help it! But He that waters every moment his garden of red wine must help it. I believe He will burn the briars and thorns that come against Him. I desire to remember your ladyship to God, but little can I do that way. His everlasting goodwill be with you.

To ———.

St. Andrews.

*The World not the portion of Saints—
Stedfastness in profession must be
grounded on Christ.*

MY VERY DEAR AND WORTHY SISTER.—
You are truly blessed in the Lord, however the world frown on you, if you continue in the faith, settled and grounded, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel. It is good there is a heaven, and it is not a night-dream and a fancy. It is a wonder that men deny not there is a heaven, as they deny there is any way to

it, but of men's making. You have learned of Christ that there is a heaven; contend for it and for Christ, bear well and submissively the hard thrusts of this stepmother world, which God will not have to be yours. I confess it is hard, and would to God I were able to lighten you of your burden; but believe me, this world, which the Lord will not have to be yours, is but the dross, refuse and scum, of God's creation,—the portion of the Lord's poor hired servants,—the moveables, not the heritage. . . . Ere you were born, crosses in number measure and weight were written for you, and your Lord will lead you through them. Make Christ sure, and the world and the blessings of the earth shall be at Christ's back and beck. I see many professors, for the fashion, professors of glass; I would make a little knock of persecution to break them in twenty pieces, and the world should laugh at the shreds; therefore make fast work, see that Christ be the

ground-stone of your profession ; then the sore wind and rain will not wash away this building. This work hath no less a date than to stand for evermore. I should twenty times have perished in my affliction, if I had not laid my weak back and pressing burden both upon the Stone, the Corner-Stone, laid in Zion. I am not twice fain, as the proverb is, but once, and for ever, of this Stone.

Now the God of peace establish you to the day of the appearance of Jesus Christ.

TO LADY KENMURE.

St. Andrews, May 1656.

*On the Fall of Professors—Danger of
Security and Self-delusion.*

I am ashamed of my long silence to your Ladyship. Your tossings and wanderings are known to Him upon whom you have been cast from the beginning,

and who hath been your God of old. The temporal loss of creatures dear to you here may be the more easily endured, so that the gain of One, who only hath immortality, groweth.

TO LADY —.

DEAR LADY,—I am afraid of prevailing security ; we watch little (I have mainly relation to myself) ; we wrestle little. I am like one travelling in the night, who fancies he sees a spirit, and is filled with alarm, and dares not tell it to his fellow, for fear of increasing his own fear. However, I am sure when the Master is nigh his coming, it were safe to write over a double and a new copy of our accounts—of the sins of nature, childhood, youth, riper years, and old age. What, if Christ have another written representation of me than I have of myself ! Surely He is right, and if it contradict my mistaken and sinfully erroneous account of myself—

ah! where am I then? But, Madam, I discourage none; I know Christ hath made a new marriage contract of love, and sealed it with his blood, and the trembling believer shall not be confounded. Grace be with you.

TO LADY KENMURE.

Sept. 12, 1658.

Complaint of the State of Religion among Professors.

MADAM,—I should be glad that the Lord would be pleased to lengthen out more time to you, that you might, before your eyes be shut, see more of the work of the right hand of the Lord in reviving a now crushed and swooning church. . . . Though I was lately knocking at death's gate, yet could I not get in, but was sent back for a time. . . . It is well if I could yet do any service to Him; but ah! what deadness lieth upon

the spirit ! and deadness breedeth distance from God. : . . Madam, these many years the Lord hath let you see a clear difference between those who serve God and love his name, and those who serve Him not ; and I judge you look upon the way of Christ as the only best way, and that you would not exchange Christ for the world's god, and their manners, and that you can give Christ a testimony of chief among ten thousand. True it is that many of us have fallen from our first love ; but Christ hath renewed his first love of our espousals unto himself, and multiplied the seekers of God all the country over, even where Christ was scarce named, east and west, north and south, above the number that our fathers ever knew.

But ah, Madam ! what shall be done and said of many fallen stars, and many ear to God, complying wofully, and sailing to the nearest shore ? Yea, and we are consumed in the furnace, but not

melted ; burnt, but not purged ; our dross is not removed, but our scum remains in us ; and in the furnace we fret, we faint, and what is more strange, we slumber. The fire burneth round about us and we lay it not to heart. . . . Oh where is our wisdom, that we sit still, laughing, eating, sleeping, prisoners and do not pack up all our best things for the journey, desiring always to be clothed with our house from above not made with hands !

There is a universal complaint of deadness of spirit on all that know God. He that writes to you, Madam, is as deep in this as any, and is afraid of a strong and hot battle before time be at a close ; but no matter, if the Lord crown all with the victorious triumphing of faith. God teacheth us by *terrible things in righteousness*. We see many things, but we observe nothing. Our drink is sour, grey hairs are here and there upon us.

I judge it were fit, now, when tall professors and when many stars fall from

heaven, and yet we sit and are settled on our lees, to consider how irrecoverable a woe it is to be under a beguile in the matter of eternity; and what if I, who can have a subscribed testimony of many, who shall stand at the right hand of the Judge, shall miss Christ's approving testimony, and be set on the left hand, among the goats? There is such a beguile—(Matt. vii. 22; xxv. 8–12; Luke xiii. 25, 26). And it befalls many; and what if it befall me, who have but too much art to cozen my own soul and others! with the flourish. Ah! we savour not the things that are above, but we transact and agree with time for a new lease of claymansions. . . . Ah! we pray not enough, but wonder that Christ cometh not the higher way by might, by power, by garments rolled in blood. What if He come the lower way? Surely we sin in putting the book in his hand, as if *we* could teach the Almighty knowledge; we make haste, we believe not. Our

draws straight lines, though we think and say they are crooked. Oh ! that I might adore Him in his hidden ways, when there is darkness under his feet, and darkness in his pavilion, and clouds are about his throne. Madam, hoping, believing, patient praying is our life. He loses no time ; the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

SELECT SENTENCES.

OH, the depth of Christ's love ! It hath neither brim nor bottom ! Oh that the blind world saw his beauty ! None cometh dry from David's well : let us go amongst the rest, and cast down our buckets into Christ's ocean.

You complain of yourself, and it becometh a sinner so to do. In that sense death is a friend of kin to life ; the more sense the more life, the more sense of sin the less sin.

Be not afraid for little grace. Christ soweth his living seed, and He will not lose his seed. If He have the guiding of my stock and state, I shall not miscarry. Our spoiled works, losses, deadness, cold -

ness, wretchedness, are the ground which the good husbandman laboureth.

Light and the saving use of light are far different.

Events are God's. Let us do and not plead against God's office ; let Him set at his own helm, who moderateth all events.

Think not much of a storm upon the ship that Christ saileth in : no one shall fall overboard ; but the crazed ship and sea-sick passengers shall come safe to land.

The cross of Christ is the sweetest burden that ever I bear : it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or sails to a ship, to carry me forward to my harbour.

The saints *seem* to have the worse of

it, (for apprehensions can make a lie of Christ and of his love) ; but it is not so. Providence is not rolled upon unequal and crooked wheels. *All* things work together for the good of those who love God and are the called according to his purpose.

Nothing, nothing I say, but sound sanctification can abide the Lord's fan.

The sense of our wants, when withal we have a restlessness, and a sort of spiritual impatience under them, because we want Him whom our soul loveth, is that which maketh an open door to Christ, and when we think we are going backwards because we feel deadness, we are going forward ; for the more sense, the more life, and no sense argueth no life.

The thing that we mistake is the want of *victory* ; we hold this want to be the mark of one who hath no grace. Nay, I say the want of fighting were a mark of no grace, but I shall not say the want of victory is such a mark.

Oh, how easy it is to deceive ourselves, and to sleep, and just wish that Heaven may fall down into our laps.

I see many leaking vessels fair before the wind, and professors who take their conversion upon trust ; and they go on securely and see not the under-water until a storm sink them.

Make fast and sure work of life eternal, sow not rotten seed ; every man's work will speak for itself what his seed has been.

Holy fear is a searching of the camp, that there be no enemy within our own bosom to betray us ; and a seeing that all be fast and sure.

Think not the common way of serving

God, as neighbours and others do, will bring you to heaven.


Our pride must have winter weather to rot it.

Happy are they who are found watching. Our sand-glass is not so long that we need grow weary.

Alas! that so many are carried with the times! As if their conscience rolled upon oiled wheels, so do they go any way the wind bloweth them.

They are blessed who suffer and sin not, for suffering is the badge that Christ hath put upon his followers.

This world thinketh heaven but at the next door, and that godliness may sleep in a bed of down till it come to Heaven, but that will not do it.



Many are beguiled with this, that they are free of scandalous and crying abominations; but the tree that bringeth not forth *good* fruit is for the fire; the man that is not born again, cannot enter into the kingdom of God.



